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HISTORICAL

AND

BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS.

BY

JOHN FORSTER.

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IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

DANIEL DE FOE.
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CHARLES CHURCHILL.
SAMUEL FOOTE.

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DANIEL DE FOE.[1]

1661—1731.

The Novels and Miscellaneous Works of Daniel De Foe; with a Biographical Memoir of the Author. 20 vols. 12mo. Oxford: 1842.

The Works of Daniel De Foe. 3 vols. royal 8vo. London: 1843.

Charles II. 1661—1685.

SWIFT proposed, for one of the sour consolations of his Irish exile, to compile a catalogue of Things that Ought to have Succeeded. A modern version of the sorry list would be incomplete without the Complete Editions of De Foe. Better undertakings have never more decisively failed. Of the only two attempts, now before us, made with any sort of pretension to success, the first scantly executed a limited design, and the second abruptly stopped with four-fifths of its labour unaccomplished. Such as they are, the intelligent bookseller offers them for something less than a fourth of their original cost, and has yet to complain that his customers turn away. He would fain think better of the writer with whom his boyhood associates the first and most enduring delight he has received from literature; and perhaps he moves him with some reluctance from that popular shelf which holds the Pope, the Swift, and the Addison.

It is with De Foe dead, as it was with De Foe living. He stands apart from the circle of the reigning wits of his time, and his name is not called over with theirs. What in this respect was formerly the fashion, is the fashion

[1] From the *Edinburgh Review*, October 1845. With additions.

still; and whether sought for in the histories of Doctor Smollett or of Lord Mahon, his niche is vacant. His life, to be fairly presented, should be written as the "Life and "Strange Surprising Adventures of Daniel De Foe, who "lived about Seventy Years all Alone, in the Island of "Great Britain." It might then be expected to compare, in vicissitude and interest, with his immortal romance; as hitherto written, it has only shared the fate of his manly but perishable polemics.

He was born much about the time of that year of grace 1661, when Mr. Pepys and his wife, walking in Whitehall Gardens, saw "the finest smocks and linen petticoats of "my Lady Castlemaine, laced with rich lace at the "bottom," that ever they saw: "and did me good to "look at them," adds the worthy man. There was little else in those days to do any body good. The people, drunk with the orgies of the Restoration, rejoiced in nothing so much as in pimps and courtesans; and to be a bad Englishman and a worse Christian, was to be a good Protestant and a loyal subject. Sheldon governed the Church, and Clarendon the State; the bishop having no better charity than to bring Presbyterian preachers into contempt, and the chancellor no better wisdom than to reduce them to beggary. While Sheldon entertained his dinner-table with caricatures of a dissenting minister's sermon, "till," says one of his guests, "it made us all "burst," Clarendon was drawing up that act of uniformity, by which, in one day, he threw out three thousand ministers from the benefices they held.

This was in 1662; and the beginning of that system of religious persecution, under which, with God's blessing, the better part of the English character reawakened, and the hardy virtues of Dissent struck root and flourished. Up to this time, vast numbers of the Presbyterians, strongly attached to monarchy, desired but a reasonable settlement of episcopacy, and would have given in their adherence to any moderate system. The hope of such a compromise was now rudely closed. In 1663 the Con-

venticle Act was passed, punishing with transportation a third offence of attendance on any worship but that of the church; and while the plague was raging, two years after, the Oxford Act banished five miles from any corporate town all who should refuse a certain oath, which no Non-conformist could honestly take. Secret, stealthy worship was the resource left; and other things throve in secret with it, which would less have prospered openly. Substantial citizens, wealthy tradesmen, even gossiping secretaries to the admiralty, began to find other employment than the criticism of Lady Castlemaine's lace, or admiration of Mistress Nell Gwynne's linen. It appeared to be dawning on them at last, that they were really living in the midst of infamy and baseness; that buffoons and courtesans were their rulers; that defeat and disgrace were their portion; that a Dutch fleet was riding in the channel, and a perjured and pensioned popish despot sitting on the throne.

The Indulgence granted to Dissenters in the year of the Dutch war (the previous year had been one of fierce persecution), opened, among other meeting-houses, that of Little St. Helen's, Bishopsgate; where the Rev. Dr. Annesley, ejected from his living of Cripplegate by the Act of Uniformity, administered his pious lessons. Under him there sate, in that congregation of earnest listeners, the family of a wealthy butcher of St. Giles's Cripplegate, Mr. James Foe; and the worthy minister would stop approvingly, as he passed the seats of Mr. Foe, to speak to that bright-eyed lad of eleven, by name Daniel, whose activity and zeal in the good cause were already such, that, in fear their Popish governors might steal away their printed Bibles, he had "worked like a horse till he had "written out the whole Pentateuch." For, the gleam of liberty to Dissenters had been but a veil for the like indulgence to Papists; and it was known at this very time, that the high-minded Richard Baxter had refused a bribe of 50*l.* a-year, to give in his public approval of such questionable favours of the Crown.

Mr. James Foe, a grave, reserved, and godly man,[1] seems to have been proud of his son Daniel. He gave him the best education which a Dissenter had it in his power to give. He sent him to the then famous Academy at Newington Green, kept by Mr. Charles Morton, an excellent Oxford scholar, and a man of various and large ability; whom Harvard College in New England afterwards chose for vice-president, when driven by ecclesiastical persecution to find a home beyond the Atlantic. Here the lad was put through a course of theology; and was set to study the rudiments of political science. These things Mr. Morton reckoned to be a part of education. Young Daniel also acquired a competent knowledge of mathematics and natural philosophy; of logic, geography, and history; and, when he left the school, was reasonably accomplished in Latin and Greek, and in French and Italian.[2] He had made himself known, too, as a "boxing English boy;" who never struck his enemy when he was down. All this he recounted with no im-

[1] He lived till 1707, and two years before his death wrote this testimony to a servant's character, which now supplies no bad testimony to his own:—"Sarah Pierce lived with us, "about fifteen or sixteen years since, "about two years; and behaved "herself so well that we recommended "her to Mr. Cave, that godly minister, which we should not have done "had not her conversation been "becoming the gospel. From my "lodgings, at the Bell in Broad-"street, having left my house in "Throgmorton-street, October 10, "1705. Witness my hand, JAMES FOE."

[2] In later life, when replying with great dignity and temper to an attack by Swift, he adverts to what some of his studies in those earlier days had been. "Illiterate as I am," he says, repeating Swift's acrimony, "I have "been in my time pretty well master "of five languages, and have not "lost them yet; but my father left "the language of Billingsgate quite "out of my education. I have also "made a little progress in science. I "have read 'Euclid's Elements,' and "yet never found the mathematical de-"scription of a *scurrilous gentleman*. "I have read logic, but could never "see a syllogism formed upon the "notion of it. I went some length "in physics, or natural philosophy, "and could never find between the "two ends of nature, generation and "corruption, one species out of which "such a creature could be formed. "I thought myself master of geo-"graphy, and to possess sufficient "skill in astronomy to have set up "for a country almanac-writer; yet "could, in neither of the globes, find "either in what part of the world "such a heterogeneous creature lives, "nor under the influence of what "heavenly body he can be produced. "From whence I conclude very "frankly that either there is no such "creature in the world, or that, ac-"cording to *Mr. Examiner*, I am a "stupid idiot, and a very illiterate "fellow."

modest or unmanly pride, when assailed in after life by Browne and Tutchin, for his mean Dissenter's education. It was an act of justice to his ancient father, he said, then still living, freely to testify that, if he was a blockhead, it was nobody's fault but his own, nothing in his education having been spared that could qualify him to match with the accurate Doctor Browne or the learned Observator; and he added, that there was a fifth language, besides those recounted, in which it had been Mr. Morton's endeavour to practice and improve his scholars. "He read all his "lectures, gave all his systems, whether of philosophy "or divinity, and had all his declaimings and disserta- "tions—in English. We were not critics in the Greek "and Hebrew, perfect in languages, and perfectly igno- "rant, if that term may be allowed, of our mother tongue. "We were not destitute of languages, but we were made "masters of English; and more of us excelled in that "particular than of any school at that time."

So passed the youth of Daniel Foe, in what may be well accounted a vigorous and healthy English training. With sharp and strong faculties, with early and active zeal, he looked out from his honest father's home and his liberal teacher's study, upon a course of public events well fitted to enforce, by dint of bitter contrast, the value of high courage, of stern integrity, and of unbending faithfulness. He would be told, by all whom he esteemed, of the age of great deeds and thoughts which had lately passed away; and thus early would learn the difference, on which he dwelt in one of his first writings, between the grand old blind schoolmaster of Bunhill-fields, just buried in his father's parish of Cripplegate,[1] and the ribald crowd of profligate poets lounging and sauntering in St. James's. There is no better school for the love of virtue, than that of hatred and contempt for vice. He would hear discussed, with fervid and honest indignation, the recall of the Indulgence in 1674, after the measures for relief of Dissent had been defeated; the persecution of Baxter

[1] Buried in the chancel of St. Giles at Cripplegate, November 1674, JOHN MILTON.

and Manton in the following year; the subsequent gross interference of the Bishops against a final effort for accommodation; and the fierce cruelty of the penal laws against Nonconformists, between 1676 and 1678. Then, in the latter memorable year, he would find himself involved in that sudden and fierce reaction of the Anti-Papist feeling of the time, which, while Protestants and Presbyterians were groaning under a Popish prince, sent numberless innocent Roman Catholic gentlemen to Protestant and Presbyterian scaffolds.

When the rage of the so-called Popish Plot burst forth, Mr. Morton's favourite pupil was in his seventeenth year. We need not say how freely we condemn that miserable madness; or in what scorn we hold the false-hearted spies and truculent murderers, whose worthless evidence sacrificed so many noble and gentle lives. But as little can we doubt that, to honest Presbyterians then existing, the thing was not that cruel folly it now seems to us; and we can understand their welcoming at last, in even such wild frenzy, a popular denunciation of the faith which they knew to be incompatible with both civil and religious liberty, yet knew to be the faith of him who occupied, and of him who was to succeed to, the throne. Out of the villainy of the Court sprang this counter-villainy of Titus Oates; and the meetings in which that miscreant harangued the London citizens, were the first effectual demonstration against the government of Charles II. We will not wonder, then, that there was often to be seen among his crowds of excited listeners, but less excited than they, a middle-sized, spare, active, keen-eyed youth—the son of Mr. Foe of Cripplegate.

At these meetings were first heard, bandied from side to side, the two not least memorable words in English history. Then broke forth, when the horrible cruelties of Lauderdale were the theme, groans of sympathy for those tortured Cameronians who lived on the refuse, the "weak" of the milk, and so had got the Scotch name of *Whigs*. Then, when justification was sought for like cruel-

ties and tortures against the opposite faith, shouts of execration were hurled against the Papists who would murder Titus Oates, and who, for their thieving and villainous tendencies, had got the Irish name of *Tories*. Young Foe remembered this in after life; and described the blustering hero of these scenes, with a squat figure, a vulgar drawling voice, and, right in the centre of his broad flat face, a mouth of fit capacity for the huge lies it uttered, "calling every man a Tory that opposed him in discourse." For, be it noted to the credit of the youth's sagacity, he did not even now, to adopt his own expression, "come up "to all the extravagances of some people in their notions "of the Popish plot." He believed, indeed, that whereever sincere Popery was, a conspiracy to act in conformity with it would not be far off. "I never blame men who, "professing principles destructive of the constitution they "live under, and believing it their just right to supplant "it, act in conformity to the principles they profess. I "believe, if I were a Papist, I should do the same. Be- "lieving the merit of it would carry me to heaven, I "doubt not I should go as far as another. But when we "ran up that plot to general massacres, fleets of pilgrims, "bits and bridles, knives, handcuffs, and a thousand such "things, I confess, though a boy, I could not then, nor can "now, come up to them. And my reasons were, as they still "are, because I see no cause to believe the Papists to be "fools, whatever else we had occasion to think them. A "general massacre, truly! when the Papists all over the "kingdom are not five to a hundred, in some counties not "one, and within the city hardly one to a thousand!"

So saved from the general folly of the Presbyterian party, and intolerant only because a larger toleration was at stake, this manly and sagacious lad needed neither knife nor handcuff to save himself from a Papist. He walked through the thick of the riots with reliance on a stout oaken cudgel, which he called his "Protestant flail;"[1]

[1] With characteristic and manly humour he wrote, several years after this date:—"Now, a Protestant flail "is an excellent weapon. A pistol

and laughed at the monstrous lies that fed the vulgar cravings, and kept taverns agape with terror. See him enter one and watch the eager group. A fellow bawls forth the last invention against "the Papishes." It concerns the new building honest men took such pride in, and Papists, for a reason, hated so. It is about the "tall "bully" of a Monument; and everybody pricks up his ears. What has happened? "Why, last night six "Frenchmen came up and stole away the Monument; "and but for the watch, who stopped them as they were "going over the bridge, and made them carry it back "again, they might, for aught we know, have carried it "over into France. These Papishes will never have done." Is the tale incredible? Not half so much, as that some of those assembled should stare and doubt it. But now steps forward "Mr. Daniel Foe." He repeats the story, and tells the unbelievers to satisfy their doubts by going to the spot, "where they'd see the workmen employed in "making all fast again." The simpletons swallowed the joke "and departed quite satisfied." The touch of reality sent it down. A genius for homely fiction had strolled into the tavern, and there found its first victims. They deserved, by way of compensation, a ripe old age, and the reading of *Robinson Crusoe*.

But the strolling into taverns? It is little likely that

"is a fool to it. It laughs at the "sword or cane. You know there's "no fence against a flail. For my "part, I have frequently walked with "one about me in the old Popish "days, and, though I never set up "for a hero, yet, when armed with "this scourge for a Papist, I remem- "ber I feared nothing. Murthering "men in the dark was pretty much "the fashion then, and every honest "man walked the streets in danger "of his life; yet so excellent a wea- "pon is it, that really the very ap- "prehension of it soon put an end "to the assassinations that then were "practised. I remember I saw an "honest stout fellow, who is yet "alive, with one of these Protestant "instruments, exorcise seven or eight "ruffians in Fleet-street, and drive "them all before him quite from "Fleet-bridge into White-friars, which "was their receptacle; and he "handled it so decently that you "would wonder, when now and then "one or two of them came within his "reach, and got a knock, to see how they "would dance: nay, so humble and "complaisant were they, that every "now and then they would kiss the "very ground at his feet; nor would "they scruple descending even to the "kennel itself, if they received but "the word of command from this "most Protestant utensil."

Mr. Morton, or the elder Mr. Foe, would have sanctioned it; but the Presbyterian ministry was no longer, as it once had been, the youth's destination. He seems to have desired a more active sphere, and he was put to the business of commerce. His precise employment has been questioned, but when his libellers in later life called him a hosier, he said he had never been apprentice to that craft, though he had been a trader in it; and it is tolerably certain that, in seven years from the present date, he had a large agency in Freeman's-court, Cornhill, as a kind of middleman between the manufacturer and the retail trader. He was a freeman of London by his birth; on embarking in this business of hose-factor, he entered the livery; and he wrote his name in the Chamberlain's book, "Daniel Foe."

Seven eventful years! Trade could not so absorb him, but that he watched them with eager interest. Nor was it possible for such a man to watch them without hope. Hope would brighten in that sensible manly heart, when it most deserted weaker men's. When the King, alarmed, flung off his lounging sloth for crueller enjoyments; when lampoons and ballads of the streets, directed against the doings in Whitehall, became fiercer and bolder than even Duchess Portsmouth's impudence; when such serious work was afoot, that a satire by Dryden counted more at Court than an indecency by Rochester; when bills to exclude a Popish succession were only lost in the upper House by means of a phalanx of Protestant bishops, and the lower House that had passed them, rudely dissolved by a furious monarch and intemperately assailed by servile churchmen, was calmly defended by a Sydney and a Somers; when, the legitimate field of honest warfare being closed, dark conspiracies and treasons took its place, and the daring boast of Shaftesbury passed recklessly from mouth to mouth, that he'd walk the King leisurely out of his dominions, and make the Duke of York a vagabond on the earth like Cain;—no fear was likely to depress, and no bragging was needed to keep in

hope, this clear, shrewd intellect. The young Cornhill merchant told his countrymen afterwards, how it had gone with him then. How Tyranny had taught him the value of liberty, Popery the danger of passive pulpits, and Oppression how to prize the fence of laws; with what interest he had observed the sudden visit of the King's nephew, William of Orange, already the hero of the Protestant liberties of Europe, and lately wedded to the presumptive heiress of the throne; of what light esteem he held the monarch's disregard of that kinsman's prudent counsel; and with what generous anger, yet unshrinking spirit, he saw the men who could not answer Algernon Sydney's book, erect a scaffold to take off his head.

That was his first brave impulse to authorship of his own. In the year made infamous by the judicial murders of Russell and Sydney, he published his first political essay. It was a prose lampoon on High Church absurdities;[1] and, with much that would not bear present revival, it bore the stamp of a robust new mind, fresh from the reading of Rabelais. It stirred the veteran libeller L'Estrange, and pamphlet followed pamphlet. But it needs not to touch the controversy now. It is dead and gone. Oxford herself repudiates, with shame, the decree she passed in full Convocation on the day of Russell's execution; promulgating, on pain of infamy here and damnation hereafter, the doctrines of divine right and passive obedience; and anathematizing twenty-seven propositions from Milton, Baxter, and Godwin, Bellarmine, Buchanan, and Hobbes, as seditious, scandalous, impious, blasphemous, heretical, and damnable.

Having fleshed his maiden pen, the young merchant soon resumed it, in a cause again involving religious liberty; with a spirit in advance of his party; and with force, decision, and success. The reign of Charles was now setting, in a sullen, dire persecution. Chapels were

[1] The allusion in the text is to the *Speculum Crapegownorum*; but since this Essay was written I have seen reason to doubt whether De Foe was really the author.

shut; ministers dying in jail; congregations scattered. A man who would not take the sacrament, was whipped or pilloried; a man who would not take it kneeling, was plundered or imprisoned. "See there!" cried the sharp strong sense of Daniel Foe, whom business had taken to Windsor, where he had sauntered into St. George's Chapel with a friend—"See that altar-piece! Our "Saviour administers his Last Supper to his disciples "sitting round the table; and, because *we* would copy "that posture, the Government oppresses us." Almost as he spoke, the end was approaching. Evelyn had seen the King on the past Sunday evening, sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleveland, and Mazarine. A French boy sang love-songs in a glorious gallery; and, round a table groaning with a bank of two thousand golden pieces, a crew of profligate courtiers drank and gambled. "Six days after, all was in the dust;" and caps in the air for James the Second.

James II. 1685—1689.

Of the new monarch's greetings, the most grovelling were those of the churchmen and the lawyers. The Bishop of Chester preached the divinity and infallibility of Kings: the Temple benchers and barristers went to Court with the assurance that high prerogative, in its fullest extent, was the subject's best security for liberty and property; and in every pulpit thanksgivings resounded. In the first months of the reign, our hose-factor of Freeman's Yard heard it publicly preached from one of these pulpits, that if the King commanded the subject's head, and sent his messengers to fetch it, the subject was bound to submit, and, as far as possible, facilitate his own decapitation. Close upon this, came the sudden tidings of Monmouth's ill-fated landing; and, of a small band of daring citizens who took horse and joined him, Daniel Foe was one. Perhaps he thought his own head nearer danger than it was, and worth a stroke for safety. He knew, at any rate, only the better sides of Monmouth's character. He admired his popular manners. "None so beautiful,

"so brave as Absolon." He had seen him among the people in their sports, at races and at games, and thought his bearing sensible and manly. What matter if Lucy Walters was his mother? He knew him to be a sincere Protestant, and a lover of civil freedom; and he remembered the more kindly his disgrace in the reign just passed, for having vainly striven to moderate Episcopal cruelties in Scotland, when he saw the first Scottish act of the reign just begun, in a law to inflict death on conventicle preachers. In a word, our incipient rebel made no nice balance of danger and success; he saw what seemed to him liberty on the one side, and slavery on the other, and he resolved, with whatever fortune, to strike a blow for the good cause. He mounted horse and joined the invaders; was with them in Bristol and at Bath; and very narrowly escaped the crash that followed.

There is little doubt that while Bishops Turner and Ken were prolonging Monmouth's agonies on the scaffold, for the chance of a declaration in favour of divine right and non-resistance; and while Jeffreys's bloody campaign, through the scenes of the late rebellion, was consigning his master and himself to eternal infamy; the young rebel citizen had effected a passage over seas. At about this time, he certainly was absent from England; as certainly had embarked some capital in the Spanish and Portuguese trade; and no one has questioned his narrow escape from the clutch of Jeffreys. The mere escape had been enough for other men;—*his* practical, unwearying, versatile energy, made it the means of new adventure, the source of a larger experience, the incentive to a more active life. He had seen Spain, Germany, and France, before he again saw Freeman's-court, Cornhill; and, when he returned, it was with the name he has made immortal. He was now Daniel *De* Foe.

Whether the change was a piece of innocent vanity picked up in his travels, or had any more serious motive, it would now be idle to inquire. By both names he was known to the last; but his books, in

almost every instance, bore that by which he is known to posterity.

He found a strange scene in progress on his return. The power of the King to dispense with the laws, had been affirmed by eleven out of the twelve judges; and he saw this monstrous power employed to stay the as monstrous persecution of Nonconformists and Dissenters. A licence purchased for fifty shillings had opened the prison doors of Richard Baxter; but the sturdy lovers of freedom who purchased that licence, acknowledged, in the act of doing it, that they placed the King above the laws. It was a state of things in which men of the clearest sight had lost their way, and the steadiest were daily stumbling. William Penn had gone up to Court with a deputation of thanks; he was seconded by not a few Presbyterians; he had the support of all those classes of Dissent whose idea of religion rejected altogether the alliance of civil government, conceiving itself to stand immeasurably above such control; and, though the main Presbyterian body stood aloof, it was in an attitude of deference and fear, without dignity, without self-reliance. For a while De Foe looked on in silence; and then resolvedly took his course.

Of James II's sincerity there is as little doubt, as of his bigotry and meanness. He had the obstinate weakness of his father. "There goes an honest gentleman," said the Archbishop of Rheims, some year or two later, "who lost three kingdoms for a mass." His unwearied, sole endeavour, from the hour when he ascended the throne to that in which he was hurled from it, was to establish the Roman Catholic religion in England. When the Church, that had declared resistance unchristian and proffered him unconditional obedience, refused him a single benefice fat or lean, and kept his hungering Popish doctors outside the butteries of her Oxford colleges,—the Dissenters became his hope. If he could array Dissent against the Church, there was an entrance yet for Rome. That was his passion. He had literally no other; and, to balance or counteract it, he had neither breadth of

understanding nor warmth of heart. It stood him in the stead, therefore, of every other faith or feeling; and, when the game went wholly against him, he had no better source of courage. He thought but of "raising the Host," and winning it that way.

De Foe understood both the game and the gambler. We could name no man of the time who understood them so clearly as this young trader of Cornhill. He saw the false position of all parties; the blundering clash of interests, the wily complications of policy. He spoke with contempt of a Church that, with its "fawning, "whining, canting sermons," had played the Judas to its Sovereign. He condemned the address-making Dissenters, who, in their zeal for religious liberty, had forgotten civil freedom. He exposed the conduct of the King, as, in plain words, a fraudulent scheme "to "create a feud between Dissenters and the Establish- "ment, and so destroy both in the end." And with emphatic eloquence he exhorted the Presbyterian party, that now, if ever, they should make just and reasonable terms with the Church; that now, if ever, should her assumption of superiority, her disdain of equal intercourse, her denial of Christian brotherhood, be effectually rebuked; that between the devil sick and the devil well, there was a monstrous difference; and that, failing any present assertion of rights and guarantees, it would be hopeless to expect them when she should have risen, once more strengthened, from her humble diet and her recumbent posture.

The advice and the warning were put forth in two masterly publications. The Dissenters condemned them, and took every occasion to disclaim their author. De Foe had looked for no less. In his twenty-sixth year, he found himself that solitary, resolute, independent thinker, which, up to his seventieth year, he remained. What he calls the "grave, weak, good men" of the party, did not fail to tell him of his youth and inexperience; but, for all that fell out, he had prepared himself abundantly. "He

" that will serve men, must not promise himself that he " shall not anger them. I have been exercised in this usage " even from a youth. I had their reproaches when I blamed " their credulity and confidence in the flatteries and ca- " resses of Popery; and when I protested against addresses " of thanks for an illegal liberty of conscience founded on " a dispensing power." He was thus early initiated in the transcendent art of thinking and standing ALONE.

Whoso can do this manfully, will find himself least disposed to be alone, when any great good thing is in progress. De Foe would have worked with the meanest of the men opposed to him, in the business of the nation's deliverance. He knew that Dyckvelt was now in England, in communication with the leaders of both parties in the State. He had always honoured the steady-purposed Dutchman's master as the head of the league of the great European confederacy, which wanted only England to enable it to complete its noble designs. He believed it to be the duty of that prince, connected both by birth and marriage with the English throne, to watch the course of public affairs in a country which by even the natural course of succession he might be called to govern. But he despised the Tory attempt to mix up a claim of legitimacy with the greater principle of elective sovereignty; and he laughed with the hottest of the Jacobites at the miserable warming-pan plot. He felt, and was the first to state it in print at the time, that the title to the throne was but in another form the more sacred title of the people to their liberties; and so, when he heard of the landing at Torbay, he mounted his "rebel" horse once more. He was with the army of William when James precipitately fled; he was at the bar of the House of Lords when Hampden took up the vote of non-allegiance to a Popish sovereign, and when the memorable resolution of the 13th of February declared that no King had reigned in England since the day of James's flight; he heard William's first speech to the Houses five days later; and, "gallantly mounted and

"richly accoutred," he was foremost in the citizen troop of volunteer-horse, who were William and Mary's guard of honour at their first visit to Guildhall.[1]

De Foe never ceased to commemorate William's bearing in these passages of his life. While the Convention debates were in progress, the calmly resolute Stadtholder had stayed, secluded, at St. James's. Sycophants sought access to him, counsellors would have advised with him, in vain. He invited no popularity; he courted no party. The only Tory chief who spoke with him, came back to tell his friends that he set "little value on a crown." The strife, the heat, the violent animosity, the doubtful success—all that in these celebrated debates seemed to affect his life and fortune—moved him not. He desired nothing to be concealed from him; but he said nothing to his informants. This only was known: he would not hold his crown by the apron-strings of his wife. He would not reign but as an independent sovereign. "They are "an inconstant people, Marshal," he quietly observed to Schomberg.

William III. 1689—1702. Here, then, in the prince who now ruled over England, was a man who also could stand ALONE. Here was a king

[1] Oldmixon's account is characteristic. Of course the inveterate old Whig libels De Foe, but a sufficient refutation of his sneers will be given before this Essay closes. "Their "Majesties," he says, describing the grand day at Guildhall, "attended "by their royal highnesses and a "numerous train of nobility and "gentry, went first to a balcony pre- "pared for them at the Angel in "Cheapside, to see the show; which, "for the great number of liverymen, "the full appearance of the militia "and artillery company, the rich "adornments of the pageants, and "the splendour and good order of the "whole proceeding, outdid all that "had been seen before upon that "occasion; and what deserved to be "particularly mentioned, was a royal "regiment of volunteer-horse, made "up of the chief citizens, who, being "gallantly mounted and richly accou- "tred, were led by the Earl of Mon- "mouth, now Earl of Peterborough, "and attended their majesties from "Whitehall. Among these troopers, "who were for the most part Dis- "senters, was *Daniel Foe*, at that "time a hosier in Freeman's-yard, "Cornhill; the same who afterwards "was pilloried for writing an ironical "invective against the Church, and "did, after that, 'list in the service "of Mr. Robert Harley, and those "brethren of his who passed the "Schism and Occasional bills, broke "the confederacy, and made a shame- "ful and ruinous peace with France."

for such a subject as De Foe. We may not wonder that the admiration conceived of him by the citizen merchant deepened into passion. He reverenced him, loved, and honoured him; and kept as a festival in his house, even to the close of his life, that great day in the month of November which is so remarkably associated with William's name. On that day, exclaimed De Foe with enthusiasm, he was born; on that day he married the daughter of England; on that day he rescued the nation from a bondage worse than that of Egypt, a bondage of soul as well as bodily servitude! Its first celebration was held at a country house in Tooting, which it would seem De Foe now occupied; and the manner of it afforded in itself some proof, of what we hardly need to be told, that the resolute, practical habits of this earnest, busy man, were not unattended by that genial warmth of nature which alone imparts strength of character such as his, and without which never public virtue, and rarely private, comes quite to its maturity. In this village, too, in this year of the Revolution, we find him occupied in erecting a meeting-house; in drawing together a Nonconformist congregation; and in providing a man of learning for their minister. It was an object always near his heart. For, every new foundation of that kind went some way towards the rendering Dissent a permanent separate interest, and an independent political body, in the State; and the Church's reviving heats made the task at once imperative and easy. Wherever intemperate language, and overbearing arrogant persecution, are characteristics of the highest churchmen, should we marvel that sincere church-goers turn affrighted from the flame they see incessantly flickering about those elevated rods, which they had innocently looked to for safe conductors?

But, in the midst of his labours and enjoyments, there came a stroke of evil fortune. He had married some little time before this (nothing further is known on that head, but that in the course of his life he had two wives, the first named Mary, and the second Susannah); and,

with the prospect of a family growing up around him, he saw his fortune swept suddenly away by a large unsuccessful adventure. One angry creditor took out a commission of bankruptcy; and De Foe, submitting meanwhile to the rest a proposition for amicable settlement, fled from London. A prison paid no debts, he said. "The cruelty of your laws against debtors, without distinction of honest or dishonest, is the shame of your nation. It is not he who cannot pay his debts, but he who can and will, who must necessarily be a knave. He who is unable to pay his debts at once, may yet be able to pay them at leisure; and you should not meanwhile murder him by law, for such is perpetual imprisonment." So, from himself to his fellow-men, he reasoned always. No wrong or wretchedness ever befell De Foe, which he did not with all diligence bestir himself to turn to the use and profit of his kind. To what he now struggled with, through two desperate years, they mainly owed, seven years later, that many most atrocious iniquities, prevailing in the bankrupt refuges of Whitefriars and the Mint, were repressed by statute;[1] and that the small relief of William's act was at last reluctantly vouchsafed. He had pressed the subject with all his power of plain strong sense, and with a kind of rugged impressiveness, as of the cry of a sufferer.

[1] The extent of this service could only be measured for the reader by a description, for which this is no fitting place, of the atrocities and knaveries of every kind practised in those privileged haunts of desperate and outlawed men. Well warranted was the pride with which he remarked in his old age:—"I had the good fortune," says he, "to be the first that complained of this encroaching evil in "former days, and think myself not "too vain in saying that my humble "representations, in a day when I "could be heard, of the abominable "insolence of bankrupts, practised in "the Mint and Friars, gave the first "mortal blow to the prosperity of "these excesses." To this I will add, from another of his writings, an illustration of the "excesses" of dishonesty to which their facilities tempted men:—"Nothing was more "frequent than for a man in full "credit to buy all the goods he could "lay his hands on, and carry them "directly from the house he bought "them at into the Friars, and then "send for his creditors, and laugh at "them, insult them, showing them "their own goods untouched, offer "them a trifle in satisfaction, and if "they refused it, bid them defiance: "I cannot refrain vouching this of "my own knowledge, since I have "more than many times been served "so myself."

His place of retreat appears to have been in Bristol. Doubtless he had merchant friends there. An acquaintance of his last industrious biographer, Mr. Walter Wilson, mentions it as an honourable tradition in his family, that at this time one of his Bristol ancestors had often seen and spoken with "the great De Foe." They called him, he said, the *Sunday Gentleman*, because through fear of the bailiffs he did not dare to appear in public upon any other day; while on that day he was sure to be seen, with a fine flowing wig, lace ruffles, and a sword by his side, passing through the Bristol streets.[1] But no time was lost with De Foe, whether he was watched by bailiffs, or laid hold of by their betters. He wrote, in his present retirement, that famous Essay which went far to form the intellect and direct the pursuits of the most clear and

[1] I give what is said by Mr. Wilson, because of the oddity of its conclusion, and the manifest confusion of ideas involved in it:—"A friend "informs me of a tradition in his "family, that rather countenances "this supposition" (of De Foe's retreat to Bristol). "He says, that one of his "ancestors remembered De Foe, and "sometimes saw him walking in the "streets of Bristol, accoutred in the "fashion of the times, with a fine "flowing wig, lace ruffles, and a "sword by his side. Also, that he "there obtained the name of the "'Sunday Gentleman,' because, "through fear of the bailiffs, he did "not dare to appear in public upon "any other day. The fact of De "Foe's residence in Bristol, either at "this or some later period of his "life, is further corroborated by the "following circumstance. About a "century ago, as the same friend in-"forms me, there was a tavern in "Castle-street, known by the sign of "the Red Lion, and kept by one "Mark Watkins, an intelligent man, "who had been in better circum-"stances. His house was in con-"siderable repute amongst the trades-"men of Bristol, who were in the "habit of resorting there after dinner, "for the purpose of smoking their "pipes, and hearing the news of the "day. De Foe, following the custom "of the times, occasionally mixed "with them at these seasons, and "was well known to the landlord under "the same name of the 'Sunday "'Gentleman.' The house is still "standing, and is now a mere pot-"house. The same Mark Watkins, "it is said, used to entertain his "company, in after-times, with an "account of a singular personage "who made his appearance in Bristol, "clothed in goat-skins, in which "dress he was in the habit of walk-"ing the streets, and went by the "name of Alexander Selkirk, or "Robinson Crusoe." In other words, Mr. Mark Watkins had lived till *Robinson Crusoe* was published, and then, in his old age, with his wits not the clearer for all those years of ale and pipe, was apt, in still dwelling on his recollections of the Sunday Gentleman, to confound his quondam guest with the hardly less veritable creation of his fancy, and to substitute the immortal mariner for the mortal De Foe!

practical genius of the succeeding century. "There was "also," says Benjamin Franklin, describing the little library in his uncle's house, "a book of De Foe's called "an *Essay on Projects*, which perhaps gave me a turn of "thinking that had an influence on some of the principal "future events of my life."

De Foe composed the *Essay* here, in Bristol; though it was not published until two years later. What the tendency of the age would surely be (partly by the influence of the Revolution, for commerce and religious freedom have ever prospered together; partly by the financial necessities of the war, and the impulse thereby given to projects and adventure), he had promptly discerned; and he would have turned it to profitable uses in this most shrewd, wise, and memorable piece of writing. It suggested reforms in the System of Banking, and a plan for Central Country Banks; it pointed out the enormous advantages of an efficient improvement of the Public Roads, as a source of public benefit and revenue; it recommended, for the safety of trade, a mitigation of the law against the honest Bankrupt, and a more effectual law against practised knavery; it proposed the general establishment of Offices for Insurance, "in every case "of risk;" it impressively enforced the expediency of Friendly Societies, and of a kind of Savings Bank, among the poor; and, with eloquence and clear-sightedness far in advance of the time, it urged the solemn necessity of a greater care of Lunatics, which it described as "a particular rent-charge on the great family of mankind."

A man may afford to live Alone who can make solitude eloquent with such designs as these. What a teeming life there is in them!—what a pregnant power and wisdom, thrown broad-cast over the fields of the future! To this bankrupt fugitive, to this Sunday Gentleman and every-day earnest workman, with no better prospect than a bailiff visible from his guarded window, it might not be ill done, as it seems to us, to transfer some part of the honour and glory we too freely assign to more prosperous

actors in the busy period of the Revolution. Could we move to London from the side of our hero, by the four days' Bristol coach, it would be but a paltry scene that awaited us there. He has himself described it. "Is a "man trusted, and then made a lord? Is he loaded with "honours, and put into places? Has he the King's ear? "and does he eat his bread? Then expect he shall be "one of the first to fly in his face!" Such indeed, and no other, would be the scene presented to us. We should find the great Sovereign obliged to repose his trust where no man could trust with safety; and the first rank growth of the new-gotten Liberty would greet us in its most repulsive forms. We should see, there, the double game of treachery, to the reigning and to the banished sovereign, played out with unscrupulous perfidy by rival statesmen; Opposition and Office but varying the sides of treason, from William to James. There would be the versatile Halifax, receiving a Jacobite agent "with open "arms." There would be the dry, reserved Godolphin, engaged in double service, though without a single bribe, to his actual and to his lawful sovereign. There would be the soldier Churchill, paid by William, yet taking secret gold from James, and tarnishing his imperishable name with an infamous treachery to England. And all this, wholly unredeemed by the wit and literature which graced the years of noisy faction to which it was the prelude. As yet, Pope was in the cradle, Addison and Steele were at Charter House, Henry St. John was reading Greek at Christ Church, and Swift was amanuensis in Sir William Temple's house, for his board and twenty pounds a-year. Nor does any sign in the present give hope of such a future. The laureateship of Dryden has fallen on Shadwell, even Garth's *Dispensary* has not yet been written, Mr. Tate and Mr. Brady are dividing the town, the noble accents of Locke on behalf of toleration are inaudible in the press, but Sir Richard Blackmore prepares his Epics, and Bishop Burnet sits down in a terrible passion to write somebody's character in his History. We may be well content to

return to Bristol, and take humbler part with the fortunes of Daniel De Foe.

We have not recounted all the projects of his *Essay*. The great design of Education was embraced in it, and a furtherance of the interests of Letters. It proposed an Academy, on the plan of that founded in France by Richelieu, to "encourage polite learning, establish purity "of style, and advance the so much neglected faculty of "correct language;"—urging upon William, how worthy of his high destiny it would be to eclipse Louis Quatorze in the peaceful arts, as much as he had eclipsed him in the field of battle. The proposition was revived, a few years later, in Prior's *Carmen Seculare;* and in 1711, Swift stole the entire notion, and almost the very language of De Foe, in his attempt (curious as the only printed piece to which he ever, himself, attached his name) "to erect some "kind of society or academy, under the patronage of the "ministers, and protection of the Queen, for correcting, "enlarging, polishing, and fixing our language." Nor let us omit recital of the Military College which De Foe would have raised; of his project for the Abolition of Impressment; and of his College for the Education of Women. His rare and high opinion of women had given him a just contempt for the female training of his time. He could not think, he said, that God ever made them so delicate, so glorious creatures, to be only stewards of our houses, cooks, and slaves. "A woman, well-bred and well-taught, fur-"nished with the additional accomplishments of know-"ledge and behaviour, is a creature without comparison. "Her society is the emblem of sublimer enjoyments; she "is all softness and sweetness, love, wit, and delight." This pleasant passage might have been written by Steele.

His Bristol exile was now closed, by the desired arrangement with his creditors. They consented to compound his liabilities for five thousand pounds, and to take his personal security for the payment. In what way he discharged this claim, and what reward they had who trusted him, an anecdote of thirteen years' later date (set

down in the book of an enemy) will tell. While the quid-nuncs of the coffee-houses raged against him at the opening of the reign of Anne, a knot of intemperate assailants in one of them were suddenly interrupted by a person who sat at a table apart from theirs. "Come, "gentlemen," he said, "let us do justice. I know this "De Foe as well as any of you. I was one of his cre- "ditors; compounded with him, and discharged him "fully. Years afterwards he sent for me; and though "he was clearly discharged, he paid me all the remainder "of his debt voluntarily, and of his own accord; and he "told me, that, so far as God should enable him, he "meant to do so with every body." The man added, that he had placed his signature to a paper of acknowledgment, after a long list of other names. Of many witnesses to the same effect, only one other need be cited. Four years later, when the House of Lords had been the scene of a libel against him worse than that of the coffee-house disputants, but with no one to interrupt or put the libeller to shame, De Foe himself made an unpretending public statement, to the effect that the sums he had at that time discharged of his own mere motion, without obligation, "with a numerous family, and no help but "his own industry," amounted to upwards of twelve thousand pounds. Not as a matter of pride did he state this, but to intimate that he had not failed in duty. The discharge of law could not discharge the conscience. The obligation of an honest mind, he said, can never die.

He did not return to Freeman's-court. He had other views. Some foreign merchants, by whom he was held in high esteem, desired to settle him as a large factor in Cadiz; but he could not be induced to leave England. It was his secret hope to be able to serve the King. Nor had many months passed before we find him "concerned, "with some eminent persons at home," in proposing ways and means to the government for raising money to supply the occasions of the war. Resulting in some sort from this employment, seems to have been the office which

he held for four years (till the determination of the commission, 1694—1699), of accountant to the commissioners of the glass duty.[1] And, without violence, one may suppose it to be not distantly a part of the same desire to draw round him a certain association with the interests and fortunes of his sovereign, that he also at this time undertook a large adventure in the making of what were called Dutch pantiles. He established extensive tile-kiln and brick-kiln works at Tilbury, on the Thames; where it was his boast to have given, for several years, employment "to more than a hundred poor workmen." He took a house, too, by the side of the river, and amused himself with a sailing boat he kept there.[2]

We fancy him now, not seldom, among the rude, daring men, who made the shore of the great London river, in those days, a place of danger and romance—"Friends "of the sea, and foes of all that live on it." He

[1] He dedicates his *Essay on Projects* to Dalby Thomas, "not," he tells him, "as commissioner under "whom I have the honour to serve "his Majesty, nor as a friend, though "I have great obligations of that "sort also; but as the most proper "judge of the subjects treated of, "and more capable than the greatest "part of mankind to distinguish and "understand them." Dalby Thomas, afterwards Sir Dalby, was a great West India merchant of the time.

[2] I quote one of his many anecdotes of this river-side life, for the sake of the fact it records in natural history. He is speaking of the period at which the ant becomes furnished with wings, as if it were a direction to change its habitation. "Being thus equipped, "they fly away in great multitudes, "seeking new habitations, and, not "being well practised in the use of "their wings, they grow weary, and, "pressing one another down by their "own weight, when they begin to "tire they fall like a shower. I once "knew a flight of these ants come "over the marshes from Essex, in "a most prodigious quantity, like a "black cloud. They began to fall "about a mile before they came to "the Thames, and in flying over the "river, they fell so thick that the "water was covered with them. I "had two servants rowing a small "boat over the river just at that "time, and I believe near two pecks "of them fell into the boat. They "fell so thick, that I believe my "hatful came down the funnel of two "chimneys in my house, which stood "near the river's edge; and in pro-"portion to this quantity, they fell "for the space, as I could observe, "of half a mile in breadth at least: "some workmen I employed there "said they spread two miles, but "then they fell not so thick, and they "continued falling for near three "miles. Any body will ima-"gine the quantity thus collected "together must be prodigious; but, "if again they will observe the mul-"titude of these ant-hills, and the "millions of creatures to be seen in "them, they will cease to wonder."

knew, it is certain, the Kyds as well as the Dampiers of that boisterous, adventurous, bucaniering, Ocean breed. With no violent effort, we now imagine him fortifying his own resolution, and contempt of danger, by theirs; looking, through their rough and reckless souls, face to face with that appalling courage they inherited from the vikings and sea-conquerors of old; listening to their risks and wanderings for a theme of robust example, some day, to reading landsmen; and already, it may be, throwing forward his pleased and stirred imagination into solitary wildernesses and desert islands,

" Placed far amid the melancholy main."

But, for the present, he turns back with a more practical and earnest interest to the solitary resident at St. James's. It will not be too much to say, that, at this moment, the most unpopular man in England was the man who had saved England. The pensioner of France, the murderer of Sydney and Vane, had more homage and respect for lounging about with his spaniels, and feeding the ducks in St. James's Park, than was ever attained by him who had rescued and exalted two great countries, to whom the depressed Protestant interest throughout the world owed its renovated hope and strength, and who had gloriously disputed Europe with Louis the Fourteenth.

Yes! this was the man whom the most powerful in England were now combined to harass and oppose; whom they reproached with the very services he had rendered them; whom they insulted by the baseness of their intrigues against him; in whose face, to use the striking expression of De Foe, they flung continually the filth of their own passions. "I confess," he exclaimed with an irrepressible and noble indignation, "my blood boils at the "thought of it! Prodigious ingratitude! Canst thou "not, O man! be content to be advanced without merit, "but thou must repine at them that have merit without "reward? You helped to make him king, you helped to "save your country and ruin him, you helped to recover

" your own liberties and those of your posterity, and now " you claim rewards from him! Has he *not* rewarded " you, by sacrificing his peace, his comfort, his fortune, " and his country, to support you? As a prince, how " great he was—how splendid, how happy, how rich, how " easy, and how justly valued both by friends and enemies! " He lived in the field glorious, feared by the enemies of " his country, loved by the soldiery, having a vast inherit- " ance of his own, governor of a rich State, blessed with " the best of consorts, and, as far as this life could give, " completely happy. Compare this with the gaudy crown " you gave him, which, had a visible scheme been laid " with it of all its uneasinesses, dangers, crosses, disap- " pointments, and dark prospects, no wise man would " have taken off the dunghill, or come out of jail to be " master of. His perils have been your safety, his labours " your ease, his cares your comfort, his continued harass- " ing and fatigue your continued calm and tranquillity. " When you sit down to eat, why have you not soldiers " quartered in your houses, to command your servants " and insult your tables? It is because King William " subjected the military to the civil authority, and made " the sword of justice triumph over the sword of war. " When you lie down at night, why do you not bolt and " bar your chamber, to defend the chastity of your wives " and daughters from the ungoverned lust of raging " mercenaries? It is because King William restored the " sovereignty and dominion of the laws, and made the " red-coat world servants to them that paid them. When " you receive your rents, why are not arbitrary defalca- " tions made upon your tenants, arbitrary imposts laid " upon your commerce, and oppressive taxes levied upon " your estates, to support the tyranny that demands them, " and make your bondage strong at your own expense? " It is because King William re-established the essential " security of your properties, and put you in that happy " condition, which few nations enjoy, of calling your souls " your own. How came you by a parliament, to balance

" between the governed and the governing, but upon King " William's exalting liberty upon the ruin of oppression? " How came you to have power to abuse your deliverer, " but by the very deliverance he wrought for you? He " supported you in those privileges you ungratefully " bullied him with, and gave you the liberty you took " to insult him!"

Such was De Foe's living and lofty appeal against the assailants and detractors of our great King; and, after proof and trial of nearly two centuries, how small is the exception to be taken to its warmth of generous partisanship! If we see here and there a defect which was not visible to him, is there a greatness he commemorates which we do not also see, indelibly written in our English history? We may be far from thinking William a faultless Prince: but what to Princes who have since reigned has been a plain and beaten path, was rendered so by his experience and example; and our wonder should be, not that he stumbled, but that he was able to walk at all in the dark and thorny road he travelled.[1] He undertook the vexed, and till then unsolved, problem of Constitutional Government; but he came to rule as a monarch, and not as a party chief. He, whom foolish bigots libel with their admiration, came to unite, and not to separate; to tolerate, and not to persecute; to govern one people, and not to raise and depress alternate classes. Of the many thousand churchmen who had been preaching passive obedience before his arrival, only four hundred refused to acknowledge his government of active resistance; but he lived to find those four hundred his most honourable foes. From the very heart of the councils that surrounded his throne arose the worst treason against him. His Church overthrew him in his first attempt to legislate in a spirit of equal religious justice. His Whig ministers withdrew from him what they thought an unjust prerogative, because they had given him what they thought a

[1] Since the date of this Essay, Lord Macaulay's *History* has paid its magnificent tribute to the character and memory of William the Third.

just title. His Tory opposition refused him what they counted a just prerogative, on the ground of what they held to be an unjust title. Tories joined with Whigs against a standing army, and Whigs joined with Tories against a larger toleration. "I can see no difference "between them," said William to the elder Halifax, "but "that the Tories would cut my throat in the morning, and "the Whigs in the afternoon."

And yet there *was* a difference. The Whigs would have given him more than that "longer day." In the Tory ranks there was no public character so pure as that of Somers; the high-church Bishops could shew at least no intellect equal to Burnet's; among the Tory financiers, there was no such clear accomplishment and wit as those of Charles Montagu, the later Halifax. Nor, even when with all his heats of advocacy he flung himself into the struggle on the King's behalf, did De Foe omit to remember this. In all his writings he failed not to enforce it. When he most grieved that there should be union to exact from the Deliverer of England what none had ever thought of exacting from her Enslavers, it was that men so different should compose it. When he supported a moderate standing army against the Whigs, it was with a Whig reason; that "not the King, but the "sword of England in the hand of the King, should "secure peace and religious freedom." When he opposed a narrow civil-list against the Whigs, it was with no Tory reason; but because "the King had wasted his own "patrimony in a war undertaken for the defence of "religion and liberty." Nay, when he opposed the King himself in his *Reasons against a War with France*, it was on a ground which enabled the Whigs, soon after, to direct and prosecute the mighty struggle which for ever broke the tyranny and supremacy of France. "He that "desires we should end the war honourably, ought to "desire also that we begin it fairly. Natural antipathies "are no just ground of a war against nations; neither are "popular opinions; nor is every invasion of a right a

" good reason for war, until redress has first been peaceably " demanded."

If William was to find himself again reconciled to the Whigs, it would be by the influence of such Whiggery as this. Indeed, it soon became apparent to him, even in the midst of general treachery, by which of the traitors he could most efficiently be served; and when, being made aware of the Jacobite correspondences of the Whig Duke of Shrewsbury, he sent him a Colonel of Guards with the seals of office in one hand and a warrant of treason in the other, to give him his choice of the Cabinet or the Tower, he but translated, in his decisive fearless way, the shrewd practical counsel of Daniel De Foe.

That this merchant financier and speculator, this warm yet wary advocate, this sagacious politician, this homely earnest man of business, should early have made his value known to such a sovereign, we cannot doubt. It was not till a later service, indeed, that the private cabinet of William was open to him; but, before the Queen's death it is certain he had access to the palace, and that Mary had consulted him in her favourite task of laying out Hampton Court gardens. It is, to us, very pleasing to contemplate the meeting of such a sovereign and such a subject, as William and De Foe. There was something not dissimilar in their physical aspect, as in their moral temperament resemblances undoubtedly existed. The King was the elder by ten years; but the middle size, the spare figure, the hooked nose, the sharp chin, the keen grey eye, the large forehead, and grave appearance, were common to both. William's manner was cold, except in battle; and little warmth was ascribed to De Foe's unless he spoke of civil liberty. There would be little recognition of Literature on either hand, yet nothing looked for that was not amply given. When the Stadtholder, in his practical way, complimented St. Evremont on having been a major-general in France, the dandy man of letters took offence; but if the King merely spoke to De Foe as one who had borne arms with Monmouth, we would answer

for it there was no disappointed vanity. Here, in a word, was profound good sense on both sides; substantial scorn of the fine and the romantic; impassive firmness; a good broad, buffeting style of procedure; and dauntless force of character,—a King who ruled by popular choice, and a Subject who represented that choice without a tinge of faction.

Of how few then living, but De Foe, might that last remark be made! Of how few, even of the best Whigs, was it true that their Whiggism found no support in personal spite! At this very time, old Dryden could but weep when he thought of Prior and Charles Montagu ("for two "young fellows I have always been civil to, to use an old "man in so cruel a manner"): but De Foe, even while assailing the licence of the stage, spoke respectfully of Dryden, and, when condemning his changes of belief in later years, made admission of his "extraordinary genius." At this time Prior, so soon to become a Jacobite, was writing to Montagu that he had "faced old James and all "his court, the other day, at St. Cloud; *vive Guillaume!* "You never saw such a strange figure as the old bully is; "lean, worn, and riv'led:" but De Foe, in the publication wherein he most had exalted William, had also described with his most manly pathos James's personal maltreatment and desertion.

We repeat that the great sovereign would find, in such a spirit as this, the nearest resemblance to his own; and, it may be, the best ultimate corrective of that weary impatience of the Factions which made his English sovereignty so hard a burden. It was better discipline, on the whole, than he had from his old friend Sir William Temple, whom, on his difficulty with the ultra-factious Triennial bill, he went to Moor Park to consult: when the wary diplomatist could but set his Irish amanuensis, Mr. Jonathan Swift, to draw up wise precedents for the monarch's quiet digestion of the bill, Whigs, Tories, and all; and the monarch could but drily express his thanks to Mr. Swift, by teaching him to digest asparagus, against all precedent, by swallowing stalks and all.

Those great questions of Triennial bill, of Treason bill, of Settlement Securities bill, whether dictated by wisdom or by faction, we need touch but lightly here. All worked wisely. Urged by various motives, they tended yet to a common end. Silently, steadily, securely, while the roar of dispute and discontent swelled and raged above, the solid principles of the Revolution were rooting themselves deep in the soil below. The censorship of the press expired in 1694; no man in the State was found to suggest its renewal; and it passed away for ever. What, before, it had been the interest of government to impeach, it was now its interest to maintain; what the Tories formerly would have checked in the power of the House of Commons, their interests now compelled them to extend. All became committed to the principle of Resistance; and, whether for party or for patriotism, Liberty was the cry of all. De Foe turned aside from politics, when their aspect seemed for a time less virulent; and applied himself to what is always of intimate connection with them, and of import yet more momentous—the moral aspects of the time.

We do not, however, think that he always penetrated with success to the heart of a moral question. He was somewhat obstructed, at the threshold, by the formal and limited points of Presbyterian breeding; and there were depths in morals and in moral causes, which undoubtedly he never sounded. Even the more practical and earnest features of his character had in this respect brought their disadvantages; and, on some points, stopped him short of that highest reach and grace of intellect, which in a consummate sense constitutes the ideal, and takes leave of the merely shrewd, solid, acute, and palpable. The god of reality and matter-of-fact, is not always in these things a divine god. But there was a manliness and courage well worthy of him in the general tone he took, and the game at which he flew. He represented in his Essay, the *Poor Man;* and his object was to show that Acts of Parliament were useless, which enabled those who

administered them to pass over in their own class what they punished in classes below them. He arraigned that tendency of English legislation, which afterwards passed into a proverb, to "punish men for being poor." Abundant were the penalties, he admitted, against vicious practices, but, severe as they were, they were all of cob-web structure, in which only the small flies were caught, while the great ones broke through; and he set forth a petition, pregnant with sense and wit, that the Stocks and House of Correction should be straightway abolished, "till "the Nobility, Gentry, Justices of the Peace, and Clergy, "will be pleased to reform their own manners." He lived in an age of Justice Midases and Parson Trullibers, and he assails both with singular bitterness. "The Parson "preaches a thundering sermon against drunkenness, and "the Justice sets my poor neighbour in the stocks; and "I am like to be much the better for either, when I know "that this same Parson and this same Justice were both "drunk together but the night before."

He knows little of De Foe, who would suspect him of a class-prejudice of his own in this. When, in the present year, the Presbyterian Lord Mayor, going in his robes and chain in the morning to the church, and in the afternoon to the Pinner's-hall meeting-house, raised a vehement and bitter discussion on the question of Occasional Conformity,—ardent Dissenter though he was, De Foe did not hesitate to take part with the Church. He could not see, he said, why Sir Humphrey Edwin should wish, like a boy upon a holiday, to display his fine clothes at either church or meeting-house. In a religious view, he thought that if it was a point of conscience with a Dissenter not to conform to the Established Church, he could not possibly receive a dispensation to do so from the mere fact of his holding a civic office; in a political view, he held what was called Occasional Conformity to be a surrender of the dignity and independence of Dissent, likely to lead to larger and dangerous concessions; and he maintained these opinions with great force of argument. He was in

the right; and the party never forgave him. On no question, no matter how deeply affecting their common interests, could the Dissenters afterwards bring themselves to act cordially with De Foe. Pious Presbyterian ministers took his moral treatises into their pulpits with them, cribbed from them, preached upon their texts, largely quoted them, but were careful to suppress his name.

Another point of attack in his publications on the manners of his time, had reference to the Stage. With whatever views we approach the consideration of this subject, there can be but one opinion of the existing condition of the theatres. They were grossly profligate. Since that year after the Restoration in which Mr. Evelyn saw the performance of *Hamlet*, and had reason to note that "the old plays begin to disgust this refined "age, since his Majesty's being so long abroad," vice had made its home in the theatres. Nor had any check been at this time given to it. The severe tone of William III's Court had only made the contrast more extreme. Collier had not yet published his *Short View*. Burnet had not yet written that volume of his *Own Time* wherein he described, with perhaps more sense than logic, the stage as the corrupter of the town, and the bad people of the town as the corrupters of the stage; and proclaimed it a "shame to our nation and religion to see the stage so "reformed in France, and so polluted still in England." Neither was the evil merely left unrestrained; for it had lately received potent assistance from the unequalled wit of Congreve, whose Maskwell and Lady Touchwood were now affecting even the ladies in the lobbies, and their attendants, with a touch of shame. Nevertheless, while we admit his excellent intention, we cannot think that De Foe made any figure in the argument. He many times returned to it, but never with much effect. His objections would as freely have applied to the best-conducted theatre. Nor, in the special immoralities assigned, had he hit the point exactly. To bring women into the performance of female characters was a decided improvement. The morals

of Charles II's age, though openly and generally worse, were, in particular respects, not so bad as those of James I; neither was the stage of even Wycherley and Etherege so deeply immoral as that of Beaumont and Fletcher.

We do not know if the Muses resented, in De Foe's case, this unfriendliness to one of their favourite haunts; but when he attempted to woo them on his account, they answered somewhat coyly to his call. A collection of Fugitive Verses, published by Dunton, appeared at this time—"made," says the eccentric bookseller, "by "the chief wits of the age; namely, Mr. Motteux, Mr. "De Foe, Mr. Richardson, and, *in particular*, Mr. Tate, "now poet-laureat." (Swift was among them, too, but not important enough yet to be named.) Mr. De Foe's contribution was, "The character of Dr. Annesley by "way of Elegy;" and we must confess, of this elegiacal tribute to the memory of his old Presbyterian pastor, that it seems to us rightly named Fugitive; whether we apply the word actively to the poetry that flies away, or passively to that which makes the reader do the same. De Foe lost a part of his strength, his facility, and his fancy, when he wrote in verse. Yet, even in verse, he made a lucky, nervous hit, now and then; and the best of his efforts was the *True-born Englishman*.

It appeared in 1701. It was directed against the unrelenting and bitter attacks from which William at that time more particularly suffered, on the ground of his birth and of the friends he had ennobled. They were no true-born Englishmen: that was the cant in vogue. Mr. Tutchin's poem of *The Foreigners* was on every body's tongue. The feeling had vented itself, in the previous year, on that question of the dismissal of the Dutch Guards, which the King took so sorely to heart. The same feeling had forced the Tories into power; it had swelled their Tory majority with malcontent Whigs; and it now threatened the fair and just rewards which William had offered to his deserving Generals. It is

recorded of him at this juncture, that even his great silent heart at last gave way. "My Guards have done "for them what they could not do for themselves, and "they send them from me." He paced his cabinet in uncontrollable emotion. He would have called out his assailants, he said, if he had been a private man. If he had not had the obligation of other than private duties, he would have resigned the crown.

Then it was that De Foe stepped in with his timely service. The *True-born Englishman* was a doggerel, but a fine one. It was full of earnest, weighty sense; of excellent history; of the nicest knowledge of our English character; and it thrust right home at the point in issue. It proved the undeniable truth, that, so far from being of pure birth and blood, Englishmen are the most mixed race on the earth, and owe to that very circumstance their distinction over other feebler races. Whilst others, for the lack of such replenishment, have dwindled or perished, the English have been invigorated and sustained by it, and their best blood has owed its continual predominance mainly to the very rudeness and strength of the admixture. This *True-born Englishman* exposed a vulgar prejudice, even as it flattered a reasonable vanity; and few things of a merely temporary interest have ever equalled its success. Its first four lines—

> "Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
> The Devil always builds a chapel there;
> And 'twill be found, upon examination,
> The latter has the largest congregation,"—

are all that perhaps fairly can be said to have survived, of couplets that were then shouted from street to street; yet it would be easy, by any dozen lines taken at random from those that have perished out of memory, to show not only its merit as a vigorous piece of writing, but the art with which it appealed to the common people. Such an example would present itself at once in the passage which exhibits Charles the Second, with a view to fresh supply

against the drain upon noble blood occasioned by the Civil Wars, contributing by his personal exertion six dukes to the peerage of England—

> "And carefully repeopling us again,
> Throughout his lazy, long, lascivious reign;
> French cooks, Scotch pedlars, and Italian whores,
> Were all made lords, or lords' progenitors.
> Beggars and bastards by his new creation
> Still multiplied the peerage of the nation,
> Who will be all, ere one short age runs o'er,
> As true-born lords as those we had before;
> Then, with true English pride, they may contemn
> Schomberg and Portland, new-made noblemen!"

The instant popularity of the satire was astonishingly great. Besides the nine editions of which De Foe himself received the profit, upwards of twelve editions were pirated, printed, and sold, in defiance of his interdict. More than eighty thousand copies, we are told, were thus disposed of in the streets alone. But it is more important to have to remark, that it destroyed the cant against which it was directed. "Nothing was more frequent in our mouths be- "fore that; nothing so universally blushed for, and laughed "at since. Whereas, before, you had it in the best writers, "and in the most florid speeches, before the most august "assemblies, upon the most solemn occasions,"—Now, without a blush or a laugh, you never heard it named.

It may be doubted if this great King had ever so deeply felt a service. His opportunities were few. De Foe has recorded how he was sent for to the palace, on the special occasion of his book; with what kindness he was received; "how employed; and how, above his "capacity of deserving, rewarded." His free access to William's cabinet never ceased from this time. There are statements, throughout his writings, of the many points of public policy he had been permitted frankly to discuss with the sovereign. On the agitated questions of the partition treaties, he was many times consulted; and there was one grand theme, nobly characteristic

of the minds of both, often recurred to in these interviews. It was the Union of Scotland with England. "It shall be done," said William; "but not yet." Other things more nearly and closely pressed him then.

The rapid growth and march of the Revolution might be aptly measured by the incidents and disputes of the last year of his reign. They turned solely on the power claimed by the lower House of legislature. In several ably-written pamphlets, and particularly in a *Letter* distinguished for its plain and nervous diction, and in which the grounds of popular representation were so happily condensed and clearly stated, that it has been a text-book of political disputants from the days of the expulsion of Walpole and of Wilkes to those of the Reform Bill,[1]

[1] This remarkable pamphlet in defence of Popular Rights, may be briefly described as a demonstration of the predominance of the Original over the Delegated authority, and remains still, as it was when first written, the most able, plain, and courageous exposition in our language, of the doctrine on which our own and all free political constitutions rest. Its argument proceeds from four general propositions, which are worked out with masterly power and clearness. The first is, That all government is contrived and instituted by the consent and for the mutual benefit and protection of the governed. The second, That its constituent members —whether King, Lords, or Commons —if they invert the great end of their institution, cease to be, and surrender their power to the source from which it proceeded. The third, That no collective or representative body of men whatsoever, in matters of politics or religion, have been infallible. And the fourth, That reason is the test and touchstone of laws, which cease to be binding, and become void when contradictory to reason. Of which propositions the close and inseparable interdependence is shown, by exhibiting the respective relations and obligations of the various authorities of the State to each other and to their supreme head; it being the grand purpose of the argument to demonstrate the sole safety and efficacy of the latter in the final resort. "For, notwithstanding all the beauty of our "constitution, and the exact symmetry of its parts, about which some "have been so very eloquent, this "noble, well-contrived system has "been overwhelmed, the government "has been inverted, the people's "liberties have been trampled on, and "parliaments have been rendered "useless and insignificant. And "what has restored us? The last "resort has been to the people. *Vox* "*Dei* has been found there, not in "the representatives, but in their "original, the represented." And let no man dread such last resort, wisely adds De Foe. For what say the practical results of history as to the unvarying political tendencies of the English people? "The genius of "this nation has always appeared to "tend to a limited monarchy; and "having had, in the late Revolution, "a full and uninterrupted liberty to "cast themselves into what form of "government they pleased, there was "not discovered the least inclination

—De Foe impugned the full extent of the claim on the ground of a non-representation of the people; but a power had lately arisen within that house itself indicative of the changed relations of the Government of England, wiser in effect than the wisdom of Somers, and more cunning than the cunning of Sunderland. "The "Tories," said the latter to William, "are better speakers

"in any party to a commonwealth, "though the treatment they met "with from their last two kings had "all in it that could be to put them "out of love with monarchy. A "commonwealth can never be intro- "duced but by such invasions of right "as must make our constituted go- "vernment impracticable. The "reason is, because men never wil- "lingly change for the worse; and "the people of England enjoy "more freedom in our regal, than "any people in the world can do in a "popular government." But were it otherwise, not the less must this thorough Englishman uphold the superiority of the original power. Before there was such a thing as a Constitution, there must have been a People; and, as the end to which authority is delegated can never be other than the public good, upon the unquestioned assertion of all men's right to the government of themselves must also rest the most absolute and express confirmation that such delegated authority can receive. Addressing the King, he says, "It is not the "least extraordinary attribute of your "majesty's character, that, as you "are king of your people, so you are "the people's king; a title, as it is "the most glorious, so it is the most "indisputable in the world. Your "majesty, among all the blessings of "your reign, has restored this as the "best of all our enjoyments—the full "liberty of original right; and your "majesty knows too well the nature "of government to think it at all the "less honourable, or the more pre- "carious, for being devolved from, "and centred in, the consent of your "people." To the Lords, he conceded their place as an independent branch of the Constitution, and then tells them: "The rest of the freeholders "have originally a right to sit there "with you; but, being too numerous "a body, they have long since agreed, "that whenever the King thinks fit "to advise with his people, they will "choose a certain few out of their "great body to meet together with "your Lordships. Here is the ori- "ginal of parliaments; and, when "thrones become vacant, to this ori- "ginal all power of course returns, as "was the case at the Revolution." To the House of Commons, finally, as the representatives of the collected body of the people, De Foe turns, and with his very striking address to them may be closed this imperfect sketch of a very important and powerful political tract: "To you they have trusted, "jointly with the King and the Lords, "the power of making laws, raising "taxes and impeaching criminals; "but it is in the name of all the "Commons of England, whose repre- "sentatives you are. All this is not "said to lessen your authority, which "cannot be the interest of any English "freeholder: but if you are dissolved "(for you are not immortal), or if you "are deceived (for you are not infal- "lible), it was never supposed, till "very lately, that all power dies "with you. You may die, but the "People remain; you may be dis- "solved, and all immediate right "may cease; power may have its "intervals, and crowns their inter- "regnum; but Original Power en- "dures to the same eternity as the "world endures."

" than the Whigs *in the House of Commons.*" It had arisen into a peculiar art—this art of oratory—there. Confessedly one of the most influential of its members was he whom the last three parliaments of William elected for their Speaker; yet no man would have listened patiently for five minutes to Robert Harley, anywhere but in the House of Commons. There, he was supreme. The country gentlemen voted for him, though they remembered that his family went to a meeting-house. The younger members put forth their most able and graceful representative to honour him, when Henry St. John seconded his third nomination. And posterity itself had cause to be grateful to him, when, employing for once this influence in its service, he joined Tory and Whig in a common demand for the best securities of the Act of Settlement. It was not genius, it was not eloquence, it was not statesmanship, that had given Harley this extraordinary power. It was House of Commons tact. It was a thing born of the Revolution, and of which the aim and tendency, through whatever immediate effects, was in the end to strengthen and advance the Revolution. For it rested on the largest principles, even while it appealed to the meanest passions.

There was something very striking in the notion of De Foe, to bring it suddenly face to face with those higher principles; and this he did in his *Kentish Petition* and *Legion Memorial.* In all the histories which relate the Tory impeachment of William's four Whig lords, will be found that counter-impeachment of the House of Commons itself, preferred in the name of the entire population of England, and comprising fifteen articles of treason against their authority. It was creating a People, it is true, before the people had declared themselves; but it was done with the characteristic reality of genius, and had a startling effect. As Harley passed into the house, a man muffled in a cloak placed the *Memorial* in his hands. The Speaker knew De Foe's person, and is said by the latter to have recognised him; but he kept his counsel.

No one has doubted, that in the excitement of the debates that followed, the Whigs and William recovered much lost ground; and the coffee-houses began to talk mightily of a pamphlet written by Temple's quondam secretary, now the Reverend Jonathan Swift, parish priest and vicar of Laracor, wherein Lord Portland figured as Phocion, Lord Oxford as Themistocles, Lord Halifax as Pericles, and Lord Somers as Aristides. The subsequent declaration of war against France still further cheered and consoled the King. He sent for De Foe, received from him a scheme for opening new "channels of trade" in connection with the war, and assigned to him a main part in its execution.[1] He felt that he ruled at last, and was probably never so reconciled to his adopted kingdom. But, in the midst of grand designs and hopes, he fell from his horse in hunting, sickened for a month, and died.

There are many Mock Mourners at royal deaths, and, in a poem with that title, De Foe would have saved his hero's memory from them. He claimed for him nobler homage than such tributes raise, "to damn their former "follies by their praise." He told what these mourners were, while yet their living King appeared, "and what "they knew they merited, they feared." He described what has since become matter of history, that toast of "William's horse" which had lightened all their festivities

[1] The drift of this scheme was for directing such operations against the Spanish possessions in the West Indies as might open new channels of trade, and render the war self-supporting. Writing about it some years later, De Foe gives the following account of it: "I gave you an instance of a proposal "which I had the honour to lay before "his late Majesty, at the beginning "of the last war, for the sending a "strong fleet to the Havannah, to "seize that part of the island in which "it is situated, and from thence to "seize and secure the possession of at "least the coast, if not by consequence "the *Terra Firma*, of the empire of "Mexico, and thereby entirely cut off "the Spanish commerce and the "return of their Plate fleets; by the "immense riches whereof, and by "which only, both France and Spain "have been enabled to support this "war. But the King died, in whose "hands this glorious scheme was in "a fair way of being concerted, and "which, had it gone on, I had had "the honour to have been not the "first proposer only, but to have had "some share in the performance."

since his accident:—"'twould lessen much our woe, had "Sorrel stumbled thirteen years ago." And he closed with eloquent mention of the heroic death which Burnet's relation made so distasteful to High Church bigotry—

> "No conscious guilt disturb'd his royal breast,
> Calm as the regions of eternal rest."

The sincerity of the grief of De Foe had in this work lifted his verse to a higher and firmer tone. It was a heartfelt sorrow. There was no speeding the going, welcoming the coming sovereign, for De Foe. Nothing could replace, nothing too gratefully remember, the past. It was his pride always after to avouch, that to have been "trusted, esteemed, and, much more than I deserved, "valued by the best king England ever saw," was more than a compensation for what inferior men could inflict upon him. When, in later years, Lord Haversham denounced him in the House of Lords as a mean and mercenary writer, he told that ungrateful servant of King William, that if he should say he had the honour to know something from his majesty, and to transact something for him, which he would not have trusted Lord Haversham with, perhaps there might be more truth than modesty in it. Still, to the very last, it was his theme. "I never "forget his goodness to me," he said, when his own life was wearing to its close. "It was my honour and advan- "tage to call him master as well as sovereign. I never "patiently heard his memory slighted, nor ever can do so. "Had he lived, he would never have suffered me to be "treated as I have been in this world." Ay! good, brave, Daniel De Foe! There is indeed but sorry treatment now in store for you.

The accession of Anne was the signal for Tory rejoicings. She was thirty-seven, and her character was formed and known. It was a compound of weakness and of bigotry, but in some sort these availed to counteract each other. Devotion to a High Church principle was needful

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to her fearful conscience; but reliance on a woman-favourite was needful to her feeble mind. She found Marlborough and Godolphin in office, where they had been placed by their common kinsman, Sunderland; and she raised Godolphin to the post of Lord-Treasurer, and made Marlborough Captain-General. Even if she had not known them to be opponents of the Whigs, she would yet have done this; for she had been some years under the influence of Marlborough's strong-minded wife, and that influence availed to retain the same advisers when she found them converted into what they had opposed. The spirit of The Great lives after them; and this weak, superstitious, "good sort of woman," little thought, when she uttered with so much enjoyment the slighting allusions to William in her first speech from the throne, that the legacy of foreign administration left by that high-minded sovereign, would speedily transform the Tories, then standing by her side, into undeniable earnest Whigs.[1]

At first all promised well for the most high-flying Churchmen. Jacobites came in with proffered oaths of allegiance; the "landed interest" rubbed its hands with anticipation of discountenance to trade; tantivy parsons cried their loudest halloo against Dissent; the martyrdom of Charles became the incessant theme of pulpits, for comparison of the martyr to the Saviour; and, by way of significant hint of the royal sanctity, and the return of the throne to a more lineal succession, the gift of the royal touch was solemnly revived. Nor did the feeling explode in mere talk, or pass without practical seconding. The Ministry introduced a bill against Occasional Conformity,

[1] The Commons replied to the address in the same strain, and congratulated her Majesty on the wisdom of her councils and the success of her arms, by which she had signally retrieved the ancient honour and glory of the English nation. Very felicitous were the lines of the satire:

"Pacific Admirals, to save the fleet,
Shall fly from conquest, and shall conquest meet,
Commanders shall be praised at William's cost,
And honour be RETRIEVED before 'tis lost!"

the drift of which was to disqualify Dissenters from all civil employments; and, though the ministers themselves were indifferent to it, court bigotry pressed it so hard, that even the Queen's husband, himself an occasional conformist, was driven to vote for it. "My heart is *vid* you," he said to Lord Wharton, as he divided against him. It was a remark, if taken in connexion with the vote, very charmingly *foreign* to the purpose.

The bill, passed by the Tory house of commons (where Harley had again been chosen Speaker), was defeated by the Whig lords, to the great comfort of its authors, the ministry. But the common people, having begun their revel of High Church excitement, were not to be balked so easily. They pulled down a few dissenting chapels; sang High Church songs in the streets; insulted known Dissenters as they passed; and in other ways orthodoxly amused themselves. Swift enjoyed the excitement, and in his laughing way told Stella that so universal was it, he observed the dogs in the streets to be much more contumelious and quarrelsome than usual; and, the very night the bill went up to the Lords, a committee of Whig and Tory cats had been having a very warm and loud debate upon the roof of his house. But it seemed to De Foe a little more serious. On personal grounds he did not care for the bill, its acceptance or its rejection; but its political tendency was unsafe; it was designed as an act of oppression; the spirit aroused was dangerous; and the attitude taken by Dissenters wanted both dignity and courage. Nor let it be supposed, while he still looked doubtingly on, that he had any personal reason which would not strongly have withheld him from the fray. He had now six children; his affairs were again thriving; the works at Tilbury had reasonably prospered; and passing judgment, by the world's most favoured tests, on the house to which he had lately removed at Hackney, on the style in which he lived there, and on the company he kept, it must be said that Daniel De Foe was at this time most "respectable" and well to

do. He kept his coach, and visited county members.[1] But, as the popular rage continued, he waived considerations of prudence in his determination to resist it. There was a foul-mouthed Oxford preacher named Sacheverell, who had lately announced from his pulpit to that intelligent University, that he could not be a true son of the Church who did not lift up her banner against the Dissenters, who did not hang out "the bloody flag and "banner of defiance;" and this sermon was selling for twopence in the streets. It determined him, as he tells us, to delay no longer. He would make an effort to stay the plague. And he wrote and published his *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*—without his name of course.

Its drift was to personate the opinions and style of the most furious of the high-flying church party, and to set forth, with perfect gravity and earnestness, the extreme of the ferocious intolerance to which their views and wishes tended. We can conceive nothing so seasonable, or in the execution so inimitably real. We doubt if a finer specimen of serious irony exists in the language. In the only effective mode, it stole a march on the blind bigotry of the one party, and on the torpid dulness of the other; for, to have spoken to either in a graver tone, would have called forth a laugh or a stare. Only discovery could effect prevention. A mine must be sprung, to show the combustibles in use, and the ruin and disaster they were fraught with. "'Tis in vain," said the *Shortest Way*, "to "trifle in this matter. We can never enjoy a settled "uninterrupted union in this nation, till the spirit of "Whiggism, Faction, and Schism, is melted down like the "old money. Here is the opportunity to secure the "Church, and destroy her enemies. I do not prescribe "fire and faggot, but *Delenda est Carthago*. They are to "be rooted out of this nation, if ever we will live in peace "or serve God. The light foolish handling of them by

[1] He makes frequent mention of one of the Sussex members, Sir John Fagg, the hospitality of whose mansion at Steyning appears to have been always at the service of De Foe.

" fines, is their glory and advantage. If the gallows " instead of the compter, and the galleys instead of the " fines, were the reward of going to a conventicle, there " would not be so many sufferers. The spirit of martyr- " dom is over. They that will go to church to be chosen " sheriffs and mayors, would go to forty churches rather " than be hanged."

If a justification of this masterly pamphlet were needed, would it not be strikingly visible in the existence of a state of society wherein such arguments as these could be taken to have grave intention? Gravely they *were* so taken. Sluggish, timid, cowardly Dissenters were struck with fear; rabid High Churchmen shouted approval. A Cambridge Fellow wrote to thank his bookseller for having sent him so excellent a treatise, it being, next to the Holy Bible and the Sacred Comments, the most valuable he had ever seen. But then came a whisper of its true intention, and the note suddenly changed. There arose a clamour for discovery and punishment of the writer, unequalled in its vehemence and intensity. The very thing that made them eager and exulting to have the thing said, made them shrink in mortification and shame from the fact of *his* saying it. To the lasting disgrace of the Dissenters, they joined the cry. They took revenge for their own dulness. That the writer was De Foe, was now generally known; and they owed his wit no favour. It had troubled them too often before their time. They preferred to wait until Sacheverell's bloody flag should be hoisted in reality: such a pamphlet, meanwhile, was a scurrilous irreverence to religion and authority, and they would have none of it. Yet bad as were the consequences involved in their desertion of him, he had nothing more harsh than a smile for their stupidity. "All the " fault I can find in myself as to these people is, that " when I had drawn the picture, I did not, like the Dutch- " man with his man and bear, write underneath, 'This is " 'the man, and this is the bear,' lest the people should " mistake me. Having, in a compliment to their judg-

" ment, shunned so sharp a reflection upon their senses, " I have left them at liberty to treat me like one that put " a value upon their penetration at the expense of my " own." And so indeed they treated him! A worthy colonel of the party said, "he'd undertake to be hangman, " rather than the author of the *Shortest Way* should want " a pass out of the world;" and a self-denying chairman of one of the foremost dissenters' clubs went to such alarming lengths with his zeal, as to protest that if he could find the libeller he would deliver him up without the reward. For, Government had now offered a reward of fifty pounds for the apprehension of Daniel De Foe.

There is no doubt that the moderate chiefs were disinclined to so extreme a step; but they were weak at this time. Lord Nottingham had not yet been displaced; there was a Tory House of Commons, which not even Harley's tact could always manage, and by which the libel had been voted to the hangman; nor had Godolphin's reluctance availed against the wish of the Court, that office should be given to the member most eminent for opposition to the late King while he lived, and for insults to his memory. De Foe had little chance; and Nottingham, a sincere bigot, took the task of hunting him down. The proclamation in the *London Gazette* described him as " a middle-sized, spare man, about forty " years old, of a brown complexion, and dark-brown " coloured hair, but wears a wig; a hooked nose, a sharp " chin, grey eyes, and a large mole near his mouth; owner " of the brick and pantile works near Tilbury Fort, in " Essex."[1] But it was not immediately successful.

[1] Here is the exact advertisement: —"Whereas Daniel De Foe, *alias* De "Fooe, is charged with writing a "scandalous and seditious pamphlet, "entitled, *The Shortest Way with "the Dissenters:* he is a middle-"sized spare man, about forty years "old, of a brown complexion, and "dark-brown coloured hair, but wears "a wig; a hooked nose, a sharp chin, "grey eyes, and a large mole near "his mouth; was born in London, "and for many years was a hose-"factor, in Freeman's Yard in Corn-"hill, and now is owner of the brick "and pantile works, near Tilbury "Fort, in Essex: whoever shall dis-"cover the said Daniel De Foe to one "of her Majesty's principal secre-"taries of state, or any of her Ma-

Warrants then threw into custody the printer and the bookseller; and De Foe concealed himself no longer. He came forth, as he says, to brave the storm. He would not have others ruined by mistake for him.

He stood in the Old Bailey dock in July 1703. Harcourt, who before had carried up the impeachment of Somers, and was afterwards counsel for Sacheverell, prosecuted. "A "man without shame," says Speaker Onslow, "but very "able." It was his doctrine, that he ought to prosecute every man who should assert any power in the people to call their governors to account,—taking this to be a right corollary from the law of libel, then undoubtedly existing, that no man might publish any piece reflecting on the government, or even upon the capacity and fitness of any one employed in it. The Revolution had not altered that law; and it was in effect the direct source of the profligate and most prolific personal libels of the age we are entering on. For, of course, Harcourt's policy was found impracticable, and retaliation was substituted for it,—as the denial of all liberty in theory will commonly produce extreme licentiousness in practice. We do not know who defended De Foe;[1] but he seems to have been

"jesty's justices of peace, so as he "may be apprehended, shall have a "reward of fifty pounds, which her "Majesty has ordered immediately to "be paid upon such discovery."

[1] Some idea of the speech for the prosecution is derivable from the allusions made to it by De Foe himself in after years. Harcourt's position throughout was, that it was an atrocious libel on churchmen to conceive them capable of uttering such abominable sentiments. "To hear of a gentle- "man," says De Foe, writing during his subsequent imprisonment, "telling "me *The Shortest Way* was paving "the way over the skulls of church- "men, and it is a crime to justify it! "That should have been said by no "man, but him who could first answer "this question: Whether all that "was ironically said in that book was "not seriously, as well as with a "malicious earnest, published in "print with impunity a hundred "times before and since? And "whether, therefore, to say that this "was a crime, *flies so much in the* "face of the churchmen, that it up- "braids them with blowing up their "own cause, and ruining their friends "by a method they at the same time "condemn in others. Upon this "foot, I again say, the book was just, "its design fair, and all the facts "charged upon them very true." Then came the Sacheverell sermon at St. Paul's, transcending all that De Foe had invented as apposite to such pulpit agitators; and thus he commented upon it:—"Where were the "brains of wise Sir Simon Har- "court, when, according to his cus- "tom, bullying the author then at

ill defended. He was advised to admit the libel, on a loose assurance in the court that a high influence was not indisposed to protect him. He was declared guilty; and was sentenced to pay a fine of two hundred marks, to stand three times in the pillory, to be imprisoned during the Queen's pleasure, and to find sureties for good behaviour for seven years. Alas, for the fate of Wit in this world! De Foe was taken back to Newgate, and told to prepare for the pillory. The high influence whispered about, made no sign now. But some years after, when it was her interest to say it, the Queen condescended to say, that "she left all that matter to a certain person, and "did not think he would have used Mr. De Foe in such "manner."

But what was the manner to Mr. De Foe? He went to the pillory, as in those after years he went to the palace, with the same quiet temper. In truth, writers and thinkers lived nearer to it, then, than we can well fancy possible now. It had played no ignominious part in the grand age passed away. Noble hearts had been tried and tempered in it. Daily had been elevated in it,

"the bar, he cried, 'Oh, but he "would insinuate that the Church-"men were for these barbarous ways "with the Dissenters,' and therefore "it was a mighty crime! And now, "good Sir Simon, whose honesty and "modesty were born together,—you "see, sir, the wrong done them; for "this very man, whom you so impu-"dently said was then abused, has "doomed them all to the devil and "his angels, declares they ought to "be prosecuted for high treason, and "tells us that every Dissenter from "the Church is a Traitor to the "State." Again he says, remarking on the same subject: "When Sir "Simon Harcourt aggravated it "against the author, that he designed "the book to have the world believe "the Church of England would have "the Dissenters thus used, 'tis pre-"sumed, without reflection upon that "gentleman's penetration, that he "had not heard how eagerly they "granted the suggestion, by espous-"ing the proposal, and by acknow-"ledging it *was* the way they desired. "Now, here is another test put upon "the world of this true High-Church "principle. Destruction of Dissenters "is proved to be no more persecution "than hanging of highwaymen. This "is saying in earnest what the author "of *The Shortest Way* said in jest; "this is owning that to the sun, which "Sir Simon Harcourt said before was "a crime to suggest. Now the blessed "days are come that the great truth "is owned barefaced; and the party "that ruined and abused the author "for telling the truth out of season, "makes no scruple of taking this as a "proper season to tell the same truth "in their own way."

mental independence, manly self-reliance, robust athletic endurance. All from within that has undying worth, it had, in those times, but the more plainly exposed to public gaze from without. The only Archbishop that De Foe ever truly reverenced, Robert Leighton, was the son of a man who, in it, had been tortured and mutilated; and the saintly character of that Prelate was even less saintly than his father's. A Presbyterian's first thought would be of these things; and De Foe's preparation for the pillory was to fortify his honest dignity by remembrance of them, in the most nervous and pointed verses he had ever written.

> "Hail, Hieroglyphic State machine,
> Contriv'd to punish Fancy in;
> Men that *are* men, in thee can feel no pain,
> And all thy insignificants disdain.
> Contempt, that false new word for shame,
> Is, without crime, an empty name.
> A Shadow to amuse mankind,
> But ne'er to fright the wise or well-fix'd mind.
> Virtue despises human scorn!
> * * *
> Even the learned Selden saw
> A prospect of thee through the law.
> He had thy lofty pinnacles in view,
> But so much honour never was thy due," &c.

The entire Ode is in truth excellent.

On the 29th of July, 1703, it appeared publicly, in twenty-four quarto pages, as *A Hymn to the Pillory by Daniel De Foe;* and on that day, we are informed by the *London Gazette*, Daniel De Foe himself stood in the pillory before the Royal Exchange in Cornhill; on the day following, near the Conduit in Cheapside; and on the 31st, at Temple-bar. A large crowd had assembled to provide themselves sport; but the pillory they most enjoyed was not of the Government's erecting. Unexpectedly they saw the Law pilloried, and the Ministers of State,—the dulness which could not comprehend, and the malice which on that account would punish, a popular champion. They veered

quickly round. Other missiles than were wont to greet a pillory reached De Foe; and shouts of a different temper. His health was drunk[1] with acclamations as he stood there; and nothing harder than a flower was flung at him. "The people were expected to treat me very ill," he said; "but it was not so. On the contrary, they were with "me; wished those who had set me there were placed in "my room; and expressed their affections by loud shouts "and acclamations. when I was taken down." We are told that garlands covered the platform where he stood; that he saw the *Hymn* passed from hand to hand; and that what it calmly had said, he heard far less calmly repeated from angry groups that stood below.

> "Tell them the men that placed him here
> Are scandals to the times;
> Are at a loss to find his guilt,
> *And can't commit his crimes.*"

A witness who was present, in short, and an undeniably good one, being himself a noted Tory libeller of the day (Ned Ward), frankly admits this "lofty *Hymn* to the wooden-ruff" to have been "to the law a counter-cuff; and truly, without "Whiggish flattery, a plain assault and downright bat-"tery." Had not De Foe established his right, then, to stand there "Unabashed?" Unabashed by, and unabated in his contempt for, Tyranny and Dulness, was he not now entitled to return fearless—not "earless," O readers of the *Dunciad!*[2]—to his appointed home in Newgate?

A home of no unwise experience to the wise observer. A scene of no unromantic aspect to the minute and careful

[1] A Tory satirist of the day thus refers to that circumstance:

"All round him Philistines adoring stand,
And keep their Dagon safe from Israel's hand.
They, dirt themselves, protected him from filth,
And for the faction's money drank his health."

[2] "Earless on high stood unabash'd De Foe,
And Tutchin flagrant from the scourge below."

A most ungenerous attack, and very wantonly made. It is possible, indeed, that in addition to his grudge against the assailant of Swift, Pope may have resented De Foe's attack on Harcourt, the attorney-general, who

painter. It is a common reproach to the memory of William of Orange, that literature and art found no encouragement in him; but let us remember that Daniel De Foe and David Teniers acknowledged him for their warmest friend. There is higher art, and higher literature; but within the field selected by both, there is none more exact and true. The war of politics, however, has not yet released our English Teniers. He has not leisure yet for the more peaceful "art of roguery." It is to come with the decline of life, when that which mainly he had struggled for was won, and the prize had passed to others.

In the Writings he now rapidly sent forth from Newgate, we think we see something of what we may call the impatient restlessness of martyrdom. He is more eager than was perhaps desirable, to proclaim what he has done, and what he will do. We can fancy, if we may so express it, a sort of reasonable dislike somewhat unreasonably conceived against him now, by the young men of letters and incipient wits, the Mr. Popes and the gentlemen at Will's, with whom the world was going easily. His utmost address might seem to have some offence in it; his utmost liberality to contain some bigotry; his best offices to society to be rendered of doubtful origin, by what would appear a sort of everlasting pragmaticalness and delight in finding fault. It is natural, all this. We trample upon a man, plunder him, imprison him, strive to make him infamous, and then we wonder if he is only the more hardened in his persuasion that he has a much better case than ourselves. One of the pirate printers of the day took advantage of the imprisoned writer's popularity to

was an intimate friend of his; but I am afraid there must also have been not a little of the mere fine gentleman in the attack. De Foe was not in "the circles," and did not write always according to the "rules," and it was to be understood that the fashionable poet kept no such unfinished company. Even the paternal linen-drapery of Lombard Street may have rendered him the more willing to back out of the hosierly neighbourhood of Cornhill.* It is, however, likewise to be added that Pope, notwithstanding the real liberality of his religious opinions, if not by very reason of it, could hardly have liked the bitterness of De Foe's attacks on his kinsfolk the Catholics.

issue the *Works of the Author of the True-born Englishman;* and thought himself grossly ill-used, because the Author retorted with a charge of theft, and a *True Collection corrected by Himself.* The very portrait he had affixed to this latter book constituted a new offence. Here was a large, determined, resolute face; and here was a lordly, full-bottomed wig surmounting it,—flowing lower than the elbow, and rising higher than the forehead, with amazing amplitude of curl. Here was richly-laced cravat; fine, loose, flowing cloak; and surly, substantial, citizen aspect. He was proud of this portrait, by the way, and complains of that of the pirate volume as no more like himself than Sir Roger L'Estrange was like the dog Touzer. But was this the look of a languishing prisoner? Was this an image of the tyranny complained of? Neither Tutchin of the *Observator*, nor Leslie of the *Rehearsal*, could bring himself to think it. So they found some rest from the assailing of each other, in common and prolonged assaults upon De Foe.

He did not spare them in return. He wrote satires; he wrote polemics; he wrote politics; he discussed occasional conformity with Dissenters, and the grounds of popular right with Highfliers; he wrote a famous account of the *Great Storm;* he took part in the boldest questions of Scotch and Irish policy; he canvassed with daring freedom the measures of the Court, on whose pleasure the opening of his prison doors depended; he argued with admirable force and wit against a proposed revival of the Censorship of the Press; he put the claims of authors to be protected in their Copyright with irresistible force;[1] and finally (on the 19th February, 1704) he set up his *Review.*

[1] At this time, though the author possessed, by the common law, a perpetual right to his copy, the law provided him with no means of enforcing his right, but left every body to rob and plunder him as they pleased. De Foe tells us in forcible language, and with a striking illustration from his own case, how this "liberty of the "press" worked.

"The scandalous liberty of the "press, which no man more than "myself covets to see rectified, is "such, that all manner of property

Its plan was curious, and, at that time, new to English literature. It was at first a quarto sheet, somewhat widely printed, published weekly, and sold for a penny. After

"seems prostrated to the avarice of "some people; and, if it goes on, "even reading itself will in time grow "intolerable.

"No author is now capable of pre- "serving the purity of his style, no, "nor the native product of his "thoughts, to posterity; since after "the first edition of his work has "shown itself, and perhaps sinks in "a few hands, piratic printers or "hackney abridgers fill the world, "the first with spurious and incorrect "copies, and the latter with imper- "fect and absurd representations, "both in fact, style, and design.

"'Tis in vain to exclaim at the "villainy of these practices, while no "law is left to punish them. The "press groans under the unhappy "burthen, and yet is in a strait be- "tween two mischiefs.

"1. The tyranny of a licenser. "This in all ages has been a method "so ill, so arbitrary, and so sub- "jected to bribery and parties, that "the Government has thought fit, in "justice to the learned part of the "world, not to suffer it, since it has "always been shutting up the press "to one side and opening it to the "other; which, as affairs are in "England often changing, has, in its "turn, been oppressive to both.

"2. The unbridled liberty of in- "vading each other's property; and "this is the evil the press now cries "for help in.

"To let it go on thus, will in time "discourage all manner of learning; "and authors will never set heartily "about anything, when twenty years' "study shall immediately be sacri- "ficed to the profit of a piratical "printer, who not only ruins the "author, but abuses the work.

"I shall trouble myself only to give "some instances of this in my own "case.

"1. As to abusing the copy, the "*True-born Englishman* is a re- "markable example, by which the "author, though in it he eyed no "profit, had he been to enjoy the "profit of his own labour, had gained "about 1000*l*; a book that, besides "nine editions of the author, has "been twelve times printed by other "hands; some of which have been sold "for 1*d*, others 2*d*, and others 6*d*, "while the author's edition being "fairly printed, and on good paper, "and could not be sold under a shilling. "Eighty thousand of the small ones "have been sold in the streets for 2*d* "or at 1*d*: and the author, thus "abused and discouraged, had no "remedy but patience.

"And yet he had received no mor- "tification at this, had his copy been "transmitted fairly to the world; but "the monstrous abuses of that kind "are hardly credible. Twenty, fifty, "in some places sixty lines left out in "a place; others turned, spoiled, and "so intolerably mangled, that the "parent of the brat could not know "his own child. This is the thing "complained of, and which I wait "with patience, and not without "hopes, to see rectified."

To this he adds other illustrations of a similar kind, and then remarks:

"It may be inquired here how will "you find a remedy for this mischief? "How will you have the drones that "work none, but devour the labour "and industry of the bees, kept out "of the hive?

"It is an unhappiness that, in "answering this point, there is not "difficulty enough either to excuse "the Government in letting it lie so "long neglected, or to procure me "any reasonable applause for the "contrivance.

"The road is as plain as the table "of multiplication, and that a con- "junction of parts makes an addition

the fourth number, it was reduced to half-a-sheet, and sold for twopence, in smaller print and with double columns. After the eighth number, it was published twice a week, on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Before the close of the first volume, it sent forth monthly supplements. And at last it appeared on the Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday of every week; and so continued, without intermission, and written solely by De Foe, for nine years. He wrote it in prison and out of prison; in sickness and in health. It did not cease when circumstances called him from England. No official employment determined it; no politic consideration availed to discontinue it; no personal hostility or party censure weighed with him in the balance against it.* "As to censure," he exclaimed, "the writer "expects it. He writes to serve the world, not to please "it. A few wise, calm, disinterested men, he always had "the good hap to please and satisfy. By their judgment "he desires still to be determined; and, if he has any "pride, it is that he may be approved by such. To the "rest, he sedately says, their censure deserves no notice." So, through all the vicissitudes of men and ministries, from 1704 to 1713, amid all the contentions and shouts of party, he kept with this homely weapon his single-handed way, a solitary watchman at the portals of the commonwealth. Remarkable for its rich and various knowledge,

"of quantity; two short clauses "would heal all these evils, would "prevent seditious pamphlets, lam-"poons, and invectives against the "Government, or at least prevent "their going unpunished, and pre-"serve to every man the fruit of his "own labour and industry.

"First. That every author set his "name to what he writes, and that "every printer or publisher that "prints or publishes a book without "it, shall be deemed the author, and "answerable for the contents.

"Secondly. That no man shall "print another man's copy; or, in "English, that no printer or book-"seller shall rob another man's house, "for it really is no better, nor is it "any slander, notwithstanding the "aforesaid pretence, to call it by that "title."

Whether or not De Foe's plan would have proved effective, needs not now be discussed. Suffice it to observe, that it never occurred to him to provide a remedy by limiting the author's right to the fraction of time afterwards conceded to him; though he was fain to accept even that concession, wrung forth mainly by his own remonstrances, as an improvement on the existing system.

its humour, its satire, its downright hearty earnestness, it is a yet more surprising monument of inexhaustible activity and energy. It seems to have been suggested to him, in the first instance, as a resource against the uncertainties of his imprisonment, and their disastrous effects on his trade speculations (he had lost by his late prosecution more than 4000*l*); and there is no doubt it assisted him in the support of his family for several of these years. But he had no efficient protection against its continued piracy. The thieves counted it by thousands, when worthy Mr. Matthews the publisher could only account by hundreds; and hence the main and most substantial profit its writer derived from all the anxiety and toil it cost him, was expressed in the proud declaration of one of its latest Numbers. "I have here espoused an honest "interest, and have steadily adhered to it all my days. I "never forsook it when it was oppressed; never made a "gain by it when it was advanced; and, I thank God, it "is not in the power of all the Courts and Parties in "Christendom to bid a price high enough to buy me off "from it, or make me desert it."

The arrangement of its plan was not less original than that of its form. The path it struck out in periodical literature was, in this respect, entirely novel. It classed the lesser and the larger morals; it mingled personal and public themes; it put the gravities of life in an entertaining form; and at once it discussed the politics, and corrected the vices, of the age. We may best indicate the manner in which this was done, by naming rapidly the subjects treated in the first volume, in addition to those of political concern. It condemned the fashionable practice of immoderate drinking; in various ways ridiculed the not less fashionable habit of swearing; inveighed against the laxity of marital ties; exposed the licentiousness of the stage; discussed, with great clearness and sound knowledge, questions affecting trade and the poor; laughed at the rage for gambling speculations; and waged inveterate war with that barbarous practice of the duel, in which

De Foe had to confess, with shame, that he had once during his life been engaged. Its machinery for matters non-political was a so-called *Scandalous Club*, organized to hear complaints, and entrusted with the power of deciding them. We will show how it acted. A gentleman appears before the Club, and complains of his wife. She is a bad wife; he cannot exactly tell why. There is a long examination, proving nothing; when suddenly a member of the Club begs pardon for the question, and asks if his worship was a good husband. His worship, greatly surprised at such a question, is again at a loss to answer. Whereupon the Club pass three resolutions. 1. That most women that are bad wives are made so by bad husbands. 2. That this society will hear no complaints against a virtuous bad wife from a vicious good husband. 3. That he that has a bad wife, and can't find the reason of it in her, 'tis ten to one that he finds it in himself. And the decision finally is, that the gentleman is to go home, and be a good husband for at least three months; after which, if his wife is still uncured, they will proceed against her as they shall find cause. In this way, pleas and defences are heard on the various points that present themselves in the subjects named; and not seldom with a lively dramatic interest. The graver arguments and essays, too, have an easy homely vigour, a lightness and pleasantry of tone, very different from the ponderous handling peculiar to the Ridpaths and the Dyers, the Tutchins and the Leslies. We open at an essay on Trade, which would delight Mr. Cobden himself. De Foe is arguing against impolitic restrictions. We think to plague the foreigner, he says; and in reality we but deprive ourselves. "If you vex me, "I'll eat no dinner, said I, when I was a little boy: till my "mother taught me to be wiser by letting me stay till I "was hungry."

The reader will remember the time when this *Review* was planned. Ensign Steele was yet but a lounger in the lobbies of the theatres, and Addison had not emerged from his garret in the Haymarket. The details of common

life had not yet been invested with the graces of literature. the social and polite moralities were still disregarded in the press, the world knew not the influence of my Lady Betty Modish, and Colonel Ranter still swore at the waiters, Where, then, shall we look for "the first sprightly "runnings" of *Tatlers* and *Spectators* if we have not found them in De Foe's *Review?* The earlier was indeed the ruder workman: but wit, originality, and knowledge were not less the tools he worked with; and the later "two-"penny authors," as Mr. Dennis is pleased to call them, found the way well struck out for their finer and more delicate art. What had been done for the citizen classes, they were to do for the beauties and the wits. They had watched the experiment, and seen its success. The *Review* was enormously popular. It was stolen, pirated, hawked about every where; and the writer, with few of the advantages, paid all the penalties of success. He complains that his name was made "the hackney-title of the times." Hardly a penny or twopenny pamphlet was afterwards cried in the streets, or a broadside put forth appealing to the people, to which the scurrilous libeller, or witless dunce, had not forged that popular name. Nor was it without its influence on the course of events which now gradually changed the aspect and the policy of Godolphin's government. De Foe has claimed for himself large share in preparing a way for what were called the "modern Whigs;" and the claim was undoubtedly well founded.

Nottingham and Rochester had resigned; and the great House of Commons tactician was now a member of the government. The seals of the Home and War offices had been given to Harley and his friend Henry St. John. The Lord-Treasurer could not yet cross boldly to the Whigs, and he would not creep back to the Tories; but to join with Robert Harley was to do neither of these things. This famous person appears to us to have been the nearest representative of what we might call the practical spirit of the Revolution, of any who lived in that age. In one of his casual sayings, reported by Pope, we seem to

find a clue to his character. Some one had observed of a measure proposed, that the people would never bear it: "None of us," replied Harley, "know how far the good "people of England will bear." All his life he was engaged in attempts upon that problem. If he had thought less of the good people of England, he would have been a less able, a more daring, and certainly a more successful statesman. We do not think he was a Trimmer, in the ordinary sense of the word. When he went to church, and sent his family to the meeting house,—when, upon asking a clergyman to his Sunday table, he was careful to provide a clergyman "of another sort" to meet him,—we should try to find a better word for it, if we would not find a worse for the Revolution. The Revolution trimmed between two parties; and the Revolution, to this day, is but the grand unsolved experiment of how much the people of England will bear. To call Harley a mere court intriguer, is as preposterous as to call him a statesman of commanding genius. He had less of mere courtliness than any of his colleagues. The fashionable French dancing-master who wondered what the devil the Queen should have seen in him to make him an Earl and Lord-Treasurer, for he had attended him two years, and never taught such a dunce,—gives us a lively notion of his homely, *bourgeois* manners. Petticoat politics are to be charged against him; but to no one who thoroughly knew the Queen can it be matter of severe reproach, that he was at the pains to place Abigail Hill about her person. He knew the impending downfall of Marlborough's too imperious wife; and was he to let slip a power so plainly within his grasp, and see it turned against him? His success in the Bedchamber never shook his superior faith in the agencies of Parliament and the Press. These two were the levers of the Revolution; and they are memorably associated with the Government of Robert Harley.

As soon as he joined Godolphin, he seems to have turned his thoughts to De Foe. He was not, indeed,

the first who had done so. More than one attempt had been already made to capitulate with that potent prisoner. Two lords had gone to him in Newgate! says Oldmixon; in amaze that one lord should find his way to such a place. He says the same thing himself in the witty narrative at the close of the *Consolidator*. But these lords carried conditions with them; and there is a letter in the British Museum (Addit. MS. 7421), wherein De Foe writes to Lord Halifax, that he "scorned to come out of Newgate "at the price of betraying a dead master." Harley made no conditions, for that was not his way: he sent to Mr. De Foe because he was a man of letters, and in distress. His message was "by word of mouth;" and to this effect —"Pray, ask Mr. De Foe what I can do for him." Nor was the reply less characteristic. The prisoner took a piece of paper, and wrote the parable of the blind man in the gospel. "I am blind, and yet ask me what thou "shalt do for me! My answer is plain in my misery. "*Lord, that I may receive my sight!*" What else could such a man wish for but his Liberty? Yet four months passed before a further communication reached him. It seemed to imply reluctance in a higher quarter. Within four months, however, "her Majesty was pleased particu-"larly to inquire into my circumstances, and by my Lord-"Treasurer Godolphin to send a considerable supply to "my wife and family; and to send to me the prison-"money, to pay my fine and the expenses of my discharge."

He was released in August 1704. His health had then become shattered by his long confinement. He took a house at Bury in Suffolk, and lived there a little while retired. But his pen did not rest; nor could he retire from the notoriety that followed him, or from other penalties of that public service he still continued fearlessly to discharge. Luttrell records in his *Diary* (under date of the 26th Sept. 1704) that "it's said, Daniel De Foe is "ordered to be taken into custody for reflecting on "Admiral Rooke, in his *Master Mercury*, whereby he has "forfeited his recognisance for his good behaviour." His

name also, to papers he had not written, continued to be hawked about the London streets; and it was reported, and had to be formally denied, that he had escaped from Newgate by a trick. Then came the exciting news that Blenheim was won, France humbled, Europe saved; and De Foe, in a *Hymn to Victory*, verses of no great merit, but which cost him only "three hours" to compose, gave public utterance to his joy. Then the dry unlettered Lord Treasurer went in search of the most graceful wit among the Whigs, to get advice as to some regular poet who might properly celebrate the Captain-General. Then Halifax brought down Addison from his garret; the *Campaign* was exchanged for a comfortable government salary; and communications were at the same time opened again, upon the same suggestion, with De Foe. Two letters of this date, from himself to Halifax, have escaped his biographers. In the first he is grateful for that lord's unexpected goodness, in mentioning him to my Lord-Treasurer; but would be well-pleased to wait till Halifax is himself in power. He speaks of a government communication concerning "paper credit," which he is then handling in his *Review*. He regrets that some proposal his lordship had sent, "exceeding pleasant for "me to perform, as well as useful to be done," had been so blundered by the messenger that he could not understand it; and from this we get a glimpse of a person hitherto unnamed in his history—a brother, a stupid fellow. In the second letter, he acknowledges the praise and favours of Lord Halifax: and thus manfully declares the principle on which his own services are offered. "If "to be encouraged in giving myself up to that service "your lordship is pleased so much to overvalue; if going "on with the more cheerfulness in being useful to, and "promoting, the general peace and interest of this nation; "if to the last vigorously opposing a stupid, distracted "party, that are for ruining themselves rather than not "destroy their neighbours; if this be to merit so much "regard, your lordship binds me in the most durable, and

" to me the most pleasant engagement in the world, be-
" cause 'tis a service that, with my gratitude to your
" lordship, keeps an exact unison with my reason, my
" principle, my inclinations, and the duty every man owes
" to his country, and his posterity."

Harley was at this time in daily communication with Halifax, and very probably saw these letters; but he was a man who managed all things warily, and who, even in dealing with the press, knew the value of the delicacies. He had not appeared in De Foe's affairs since he effected his release: and that release he threw upon the Queen. In the same temper he sent to him now. The Queen, he said, had need of his assistance: but he offered him no employment to fetter future engagements. He knew that in the last of his publications (the *Consolidator*, a prose satire remarkable for the hints it threw out to *Gulliver*), De Foe had laughed at Addison[1] for refusing to write the *Campaign* "till he had 200*l.* a-year secured to " him;"—an allusion never forgiven. Harley was content, therefore, simply to send for him to London; to tell him the Queen "had the goodness to think of taking " him into her service;" and to do what the Whigs were vainly endeavouring to do for the Irish Priest who had written the most masterly satire since the days of Rabelais. He took him to Court to kiss hands. We see in all this but the truth of the character we would assign to this so variously estimated statesman. On grounds independent of either party, except so far as "reason, " principles, inclination, and duty to his country" should prompt, the powerful, homely, and popular writer had thus quietly and surely been enlisted in the service of the Government of the Revolution. Compared with Harley, we cannot but think the old Whigs, with every honest inclination, little better than bunglers in matters of the

[1] In his verses of *Double Welcome to the Duke of Marlborough* he has also a sarcastic allusion to Addison, when he speaks of the way in which

"Mecænas has his modern fancy strung—
You fix'd his pension first, or he had never sung."

kind. It is true that not even Harley could carry the Vicar of Laracor to the palace; but he could show that he understood why Swift wished to be there, and conciliate that weakness in his character. He could carry him in his coach to country ale-houses; he could play games of counting poultry on the road, or "who should first see "a cat or an old woman;" he could loll back on his seat with a broad Temple jest; or he could call and be called "Jonathan" and "Harley;"—and the old Whigs were much too chary of these things. So they had lost Prior, and were losing Parnell and Swift; and he who had compared Lord Somers to Aristides, was soon to talk of him as little better than a rascal.

We next see De Foe in the house of Mr. Secretary Harley. He has been named to execute a secret commission in the public service, which requires a brief absence on the Continent. He is making preparations for his departure; is proposing to travel as "Mr. Christopher "Hurt;" is giving Harley advice for a large scheme of secret intelligence; and is discussing with him a proposed poetical satire (afterwards published as the *Diet of Poland*)[1] against the High Church faction. In a subsequent farewell letter he adverts to these things; and, after naming some matters of public feeling in which one of the minister's Tory associates was awkwardly involved, characteristically closes with an opinion, that it was needful Harley should know in this, as well as any thing else, *what the people say.*

[1] There are excellent lines in this *Diet of Poland*, of which a great part satirizes, under cover of the factions against Sobieski, the character of the party intrigues against William III. One might expect to meet in the Satires of Churchill such a passage as I here subjoin:

"Statesmen are gamesters, sharp and trick's the play,
Kings are but cullies, wheedled in to pay;
The Courtiers footballs, kick'd from one to one,
Are always cheated, oftentimes undone,
Besieged with flattery, false report, and lies,
And soothed with schemes of vast absurdities.
The jangling statesmen clash in their designs,
Fraud fights with fraud, and craft to craft inclines;
Stiffly engage, quarrel, accuse, and hate,
And strive for leave to help undo the State."

The foreign service was one of danger. "I ran as much "danger of my life," he said, "as a grenadier upon the "counterscarp." But it was discharged successfully; and, in consideration of the risk, the Government offered him what seems to have been a small sinecure. He took it as a debt; and at a later period, when opposed to the reigning ministry, complains that large arrears were then unpaid. On his return he had found the Tory house of commons dissolved, and the new elections in progress. He threw himself into the contest with characteristic ardour. He wrote; he canvassed; he voted; he journeyed throughout the country on horseback, he tells us, more than eleven hundred miles; and, in addresses to electors every where, still he counselled the necessity of laying aside party prejudices, of burying former animosities, and of meeting their once Tory ministers at least halfway. He found many arguments on his road, he adds. He found people of all opinions, as well Churchmen as Dissenters, living in Christian neighbourhood; and he had very often the honour, "with small difficulty, of con- "vincing gentlemen over a bottle of wine, that the author "of the *Review* was really no monster, but a conversable, "social creature." His Essays, meanwhile, written in the progress of this journeying, were admirable; and with every paper that he wrote, to use his own language, *Rehearsals* raved, *Observators* bullied, and High Church voted him to the Devil. They were read in every coffee-house and club; often they were stolen from these houses by Highfliers, that they might *not* be read; they were quoted on every popular hustings; the Duchess of Marlborough sent them over to the camp in Flanders;[1] and the writer,

[1] Acknowledging one in which he is himself gallantly vindicated, the Duke writes to the Duchess, "I do "not know who the author of the "*Review* is, but I do not like to see "my name in print; for I am per- "suaded that an honest man must be "justified by his own actions, and not "by the pen of a writer, though he "should be a zealous friend." To which I will venture to reprint the brief comment which I find affixed to this passage in my copy of Wilson's *De Foe*.—Nonsense; he was afraid he would have to pay something.

on peril of his life, was warned to discontinue them. His tributes of this latter kind were numerous; he had to change his publisher, Mr. Matthews, a set of high churchmen having conspired to clap him into prison; his printer was threatened; his own house was marked to be pulled down; he was beset and dogged by adversaries armed for personal violence. Highflying Justices followed him about the country with false warrants of arrest; sham actions were brought against him in shoals; compounded debts of long past years were revived; his life was threatened by bullying letters, his morals were assaulted by impotent and groundless slanders, his principles were misrepresented alike by professing friends and malicious enemies; and only his own unequalled and irresistible energy could have stayed the completion of his ruin. But no jot of heart or hope was abated in him. "Take him with all his failings," says no friendly critic, "it must be acknowledged that he is a man of good "parts, and very clear sense. He is master of the "English tongue, and can say what he pleases upon any "subject. With all my revenge, I cannot but own his "thoughts are always surprising, new, and singular; and "though he writes for bread, he could never be hired to "wrong his conscience or disgrace the quill; and, which "crowns his panegyric, he is a person of true courage. "He is not daunted with multitudes of enemies; for he "faces as many every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, "as there are foes to moderation and peace. He *Reviews* "without fear, and acts without fainting. To do him "justice, he has piety enough for an author, and courage "enough for a martyr. And in a word, if any, Daniel "De Foe is a True Englishman." It was an honest opponent of his, eccentric old John Dunton, who said that, and honoured himself by saying it.

The elections confirmed the power of the Whigs. The Duke of Buckingham and Sir Nathan Wright retired to make way for the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Cowper; and a renegade Whig and former Dissenter, Lord Haver-

sham, led the first attack upon the ministers. De Foe was dragged forward by this lord as the "mean and "mercenary prostitute of the *Review;*" as making his fortune by the way of "scribbling;" and as receiving both "encouragement and instructions" from Godolphin. There was a quiet dignity and eloquence in his answer. He reminds the turncoat peer that Fate, which makes footballs of men, kicks some men up stairs and some down; that some are advanced without honour, others suppressed without infamy; that some are raised without merit, some crushed without crime; and that no man knows, by the beginning of things, whether his course shall issue in a peerage or a pillory. To the charge of writing for bread, he asks what are all the employments in the world pursued for, but for bread? "The lawyer "pleads, the soldier fights, the musician fiddles, the "players act, and, no reflection on the tribe, the clergy "preach, for bread."[1] For the rest he reminds him that *he* had never betrayed his master (William had given Lord Haversham his peerage), nor his friend; that he had always espoused the cause of truth and liberty; that he had lived to be ruined for it; that he had lived to see it triumph over tyranny, party rage, and persecution principles; that he thanked God this world had not a price to give, sufficient to bribe him from it; and that *he was sorry to see any man abandon it.*

Besides the *Review*, he had published, in the current year, works on Trade; on the conduct and management of the Poor; on Toleration; and on colonial Intolerance

[1] It is a remarkable fact, nevertheless, that for a great part of the time during which he was carrying on the *Review*, De Foe derived no personal profit from it. Such income as accrued to him was drawn still from the remains of his mercantile speculations; and he continued the labours and sacrifices which the *Review* involved, "amassing infinite enemies," as he remarks, "and not at all obliging "even the men I serve," for the sole reward of promoting public morals and the public service. "I defy the whole "world to prove," he said at this particular time, "that I have directly "or indirectly gained or received a "single shilling, or the value of it, "by the sale of this paper, for now "almost four years; and honest Mr. "Morphew is able to detect me if I "speak false." Mr. Morphew had succeeded Mr. Matthews as its publisher.

in North America. It would be difficult to name a more soundly reasoned or shrewdly written pamphlet than his *Giving Alms no Charity*. Yet he knew what then he had to contend with, in dealing with a subject so imperfectly understood. His judgment may differ from that of others in giving some needful hints as to the state of our poor, he says, but he must be plain. "While he "is no enemy to charity-hospitals and workhouses, he "thinks that methods to keep our poor out of them far "exceed, both in prudence and charity, all the settlements "and endeavours in the world to maintain them there." Especially did he claim to be heard on that subject, he added, as an English freeholder. His town tenements had been taken from him, the Tilbury works were gone, and the Freeman's-yard house was his no longer,—but he still possessed one English freehold. He does not tell us in what county; but he had moved his family to Newington, and it was doubtless in some way connected with that scene of his boyhood. To this date, also, belong several pamphlets on Dissenters' questions; his attempted enforcement of a better scheme for the Regulation of Madhouses, and for humanity to their inmates; and his *Jure Divino*. In the latter, the reasoning is better than the poetry, but it has vigorous verses in it, and its rude strong lines passed current with great masses of the people. It appeared with a large subscription, and such was the certainty that its author would be worth plundering, that the whole satire was impudently pirated on the very day of its publication. Now, too, there went to him that worthy and much distressed bookseller, who had published a large edition of a very dull and heavy book, called *Drelincourt on Death*, "with several directions how "to prepare ourselves to die well;" which the public, not appearing to relish unauthorised directions of that nature, had stubbornly refused to buy. What was to be done with the ponderous stock under which his shelves were groaning? De Foe quieted his fears. Nothing but a ghost from the grave, it was true, could recommend such a

book with effect; but a ghost from the grave the worthy bookseller should have.[1]

[1] In connection with this subject, and the impression one cannot but receive, from the downright earnestness with which the invention is characterised, that De Foe actually might himself have believed in the possibility of such a visitation, and so might have thought it no bad service to his countrymen to do his best to persuade them of the like, even by means of a fiction,—I ought here to mention that, besides innumerable passages in his general writings to the same effect, he published a formal treatise on Apparitions and Spirits, and the strong probabilities of their direct communication with the visible world. There can be little doubt that De Foe's religious convictions and belief sought help and sustainment from speculations of this nature, and that he believed it to be the moral and material defect of his day, that the spiritual element in life obtained such small recognition. "Between "our ancestors laying too much stress "on supernatural evidences," he says, "and the present age endeavouring "wholly to explode and despise them, "the world seems hardly ever to have "come to a right understanding . . . "Spirit is certainly something we do "not fully understand in our present "confined circumstances; and, as we "do not fully understand the thing, so "neither can we distinguish its operation. Yet, notwithstanding all "this, it converses here; is with us "and among us; corresponds, though "unembodied, with our spirits; and "this conversing is not only by an "invisible, but to us an inconceivable "way." Such communication he believes to take place by two modes. First, by "immediate, personal, and "particular converse;" and secondly, by "those spirits acting at a distance, "rendering themselves visible, and "their transactions perceptible, on "such occasions as they think fit, "without any further acquaintance "with the person." It was his conviction that God had posted an army of these ministering spirits round our globe, "to be ready, at all events, to "execute his orders and to do his "will; reserving still to himself to "send express messengers of a supe"rior rank on extraordinary occa"sions." These, he adds, "may, "without any absurdity, be supposed "capable of assuming shapes, con"versing with mankind by voice and "sound, or by private notices of "things, impulses, forebodings, mis"givings, and other imperceptible "communications to the minds of "men, as God their great employer "may direct." But upon the power of man to control, or communicate at his will with such spiritual beings, he entertains doubts, and gravely protests against the arts of conjuration. I subjoin also the curious and somewhat touching passage in which De Foe accounts for the strength of these beliefs in him, by the ordinary current of his daily experiences. "I firmly "believe," says he, "and have had "such convincing testimonies of it, "that I must be a confirmed atheist "if I did not, that there is a con"verse of spirits, I mean those unem"bodied, and those that are encased "in flesh. From whence, else, come "all those private notices, strong "impulses, involuntary joy, sadness, "and foreboding apprehensions, of "and about things immediately "attending us, and this in the most "important affairs of our lives? That "there are such things, I think I "need not go about to prove; and I "believe they are, next to the Scrip"tures, some of the best and most "undeniable evidences of a future "existence. It would be endless to "fill this paper with the testimonies "of learned and pious men; and I "could add to them a volume of my "own experiences, some of them so "strange as would shock your belief,

As speedily done as said. De Foe sent him, in a few days, *The True History of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal, the next day after her Death, to one Mrs. Bargrave, at Canterbury, the 8th of September*, 1705. If such a thing was ever to be believed, here it was made credible. When Shakespeare invented five justices to put their hand to that enormous flam of Autolycus about the mermaid that appeared upon the coast on Wednesday the fourscore of April, forty thousand fathom above water, and sang her pitiful ballad of her love adventures, we laugh at the joke, and there's an end of it. But here was quite another matter. The very narrative purports to be drawn up

"though I could produce such proofs "as would convince any man. I "have had, perhaps, a greater variety "of changes, accidents, and disasters, "in my short unhappy life, than "any man, at least than most men "alive; yet I had never any "considerable mischief or disaster "attending me, but sleeping or wak- "ing, I have had notice of it before- "hand, and, had I listened to those "notices, I believe might have "shunned the evil. Let no man "think this a jest. I seriously "acknowledge, and I do believe, my "neglect of such notices has been my "great injury; and, since I have "ceased to neglect them, I have been "guided to avoid even snares laid for "my life, by no other knowledge "of them than by such notices and "warnings; and, more than that, "have been guided by them to dis- "cover even the fact and the persons. "I have living witnesses to produce, "to whom I have told the particu- "lars in the very moment, and who "have been so affected with them, as "that they have pressed me to avoid "the danger, to retire, to keep myself "up, and the like." At a time (1855) when this subject has been revived, in a form as little likely to recommend it to the right feeling as to the rational understanding of the community, I have thought that these extracts might be interesting. I will add that this very Essay on Apparitions contains one of the best pieces of prose satire I know, descriptive of a class of men rife in De Foe's day, and not extirpated since, to whom it would be as ridiculous to talk of such a subject as to listen to its discussion by them. "To see a fool," he says, "a fop, believe himself in- "spired!—a fellow that washes his "hands fifty times a day, but, if he "would be truly cleanly, should have "his brains taken out and washed, "his skull trepanned, and placed "with the hinder side before; so that "his understanding, which nature "placed by mistake with the bottom "upward, may be set right, and his "memory placed in a right position! "To this unscrewed engine, talk of "spirits and of the invisible world, and "of his conversing with unembodied "souls! when he has hardly brains "to converse with anything but a "pack of hounds, and owes it only "to his being a fool that he does not "converse with the devil!—For I "must tell you, good people," adds De Foe, "he that is, not able to see "the Devil, in whatever shape he is "pleased to appear in, is not really "qualified to live in this world, no, "not in the quality of a common in- "habitant." I venture to commend these sentences to the admiration of Mr. Carlyle.

" by a gentleman, a Justice of Peace, at Maidstone, in " Kent, a very intelligent person." Moreover, it is attested by a " very sober and understanding gentlewoman, who " lives in Canterbury, within a few doors of the house in " which Mrs. Bargrave lives." The one vouches for the other, and the other vouches for Mrs. B's veracity. The justice believes his kinswoman to be of so discerning a spirit as not to be put upon by any fallacy; and the kinswoman positively assures the justice that the whole matter, as it is related and laid down, is really true, and what she herself heard, as near as may be, from Mrs. Bargrave's own mouth: " who, *she knows*, had no reason to invent or " publish such a story, or any design to forge or tell a lie; " being a woman of so much honesty and virtue, and her " whole life a course, as it were, of piety." Now, surely this business-like, homely, earnest, commonplace air of truth, is perfectly irresistible. And what said the ghost to Mrs. Bargrave? Why, the ghost, in the course of a long gossip, filled with the *says I* and *thinks I*, the *says she* and *thinks she*, of the tea-table of a country town, and in which are introduced scoured silks, broken china, and other topics such as the ghost of an exciseman's house-keeper might possibly talk over with a seamstress, but which certainly nobody would ever think of inventing for a supernatural visitation,—said, with all the confident dogmatism of her recent mortuary experience, that Drelincourt's book about Death was the best book ever written on that subject. Doctor Sherlock was not bad; two Dutch books had merit; several others were worth mention; but Drelincourt, she protested, had by far the clearest notions of death and the future state, of any one who had handled the matter. The Narrative was appended to the book, and a new edition advertised. It flew like wildfire. The copies, to use an illustration of Sir Walter Scott's (with whom the narrative was an immense favourite), which had hung on the bookseller's hands as heavy as a pile of lead bullets, now traversed the town in every direction, like the same bullets discharged from a field-piece.

Nay, the book has been popular ever since. More than fifty editions have not exhausted its popularity. Mrs. Veale's ghost is still believed by thousands; and the hundreds of thousands who have bought the silly treatise of *Drelincourt* (for hawking booksellers have made their fortunes by traversing the country with it in sixpenny numbers), have borne unconscious testimony to the genius of De Foe.

It was now engaged once more in the service of the Ministry. He had, in various writings, prepared his countrymen for the greatest political measure of the time; he was known to have advised the late King on a project for the Scottish Union; and Godolphin, about to immortalise his administration by that signal act of statesmanship, called in the services of De Foe. He describes the Lord-Treasurer's second introduction of him to her Majesty, and to the honour of kissing her hand. "Upon "this second introduction, her Majesty was pleased to "tell me, with a goodness peculiar to herself, she had "such satisfaction in my former services that she ap- "pointed me for another office." The greater part of the next two years was passed in this office; which seems to have combined, with the duties of Secretary to the English Commissioners for the Union, considerable influence derived from the Ministry at home. It was an important appointment, and Godolphin was assailed for it. An under spur-leather, forsooth, sent down to Scotland "to "make the Union!" It carried De Foe at various intervals between Edinburgh and London; it involved him in continual discussion leading to or arising out of the measure, as well as in the riots which marked the excitement of the time; it procured for him what appears to have been the really cordial and friendly attentions of the Duke of Queensberry and Lord Buchan;[1] it directed his attention to various matters which he believed to be essential to Scottish prosperity; and it grounded in him a high

[1] In after years De Foe's grandson bore Lord Buchan's name, David Erskine.

respect and liking for the Scottish people. They had no truer friend or warmer advocate than De Foe in all subsequent years. He liked their love of liberty, he admired their sober and grave observance of religious duties, he celebrated their good feeling and hospitality, and he pointed out the resources and capabilities of their soil. "They who "fancy," he said, in a passage characteristic in the highest degree of his shrewd and sagacious observation, and of his manly sense and spirit, "there is nothing to be had "here but wild men and ragged mountains, storms, "snows, poverty, and barrenness, are quite mistaken; it "being a noble country, of a fruitful soil and healthy "air, well seated for trade, full of manufactures by land, "and a treasure as great as the Indies at their door by "sea. The poverty of Scotland, and the fruitfulness of "England, or rather the difference between them, is "owing not to mere difference of climate, or the nature "of the soil; but to the errors of time, and their "different constitutions. And here I must tell our "friends in England, who are so backward to set their "country free, and so willing to enslave us again, that "the different face of the two countries, to whoever will "please to survey them as I have done, is the best lecture "upon politics. All the land in England is not fruitful, "nor that in Scotland all barren. Climate cannot be "the cause; for the lands in the north of Scotland are in "general better than the lands in Cornwall, which are "near six hundred miles south of them. But Liberty and "Trade have made the one rich, and Tyranny the other "poor." Nor did even such earnest eulogy suffice for the tribute he would render to the Scotch. He broke out again into verse, and wrote a poem in their praise; he busied himself earnestly with suggestions for their commercial and national advancement; and he spent some well-devoted labour, in after years, on the compilation of a very minute, and, so to speak, highly dramatic *History of the Union*. We rejoice to have to couple that act, so eminently in the best spirit of the Revolution, so large-

minded and so tolerant, with De Foe's name. It changed turbulence to tranquillity; rude poverty to a rich civilisation; and the fierce atrocities of a dominant church, to the calm enjoyments of religious liberty.

A strange scene was meanwhile going on in London. The easy, indolent Prince George (whom Charles II said he had tried drunk and sober, and could do nothing with him) had been heard to complain one day, in the intervals of his dinner and his bottle, that the Queen came very late to bed. This casual remark, falling on the already sharp suspicions of the Duchess of Marlborough, discovered the midnight conferences of the Queen with Abigail Masham and her kinsman, Secretary Harley; and the good Mrs. Freeman, knowing that her dear Mrs. Morley had not a stock of amity to serve above one object at a time, at once peremptorily insisted on the suspension of the Abigail, and the dismissal of the Secretary. We state the fact without comment; but it may be remarked, that if Harley's back-stairs midnight visits implied treachery to his colleagues, it was not of that black kind which would have ruined men who trusted him. It had been clear to the Secretary for some time, that the Whigs would *not* trust him. He says himself, and there is no reason to doubt it, that he was not enough of a party-man for them. One smiles, indeed, with a kind of sympathy for him, to read in Lord Cowper's diary of two years' date before this, his devotion of his best tokay ("good, "but thick") to the hapless effort of Whig conciliation. The accession of strength received from the great measure of the Union, had been straightway used to weed his friends from office. Hedges had made way for Sunderland; and even Prior and his colleagues, in the Board of Trade, had been removed. Nor was that an age in which party warfare was scrupulous on either side. In the session just begun, the party motion supported by Rochester and Buckingham, to ruin the Whig chiefs of the ministry, was supported by Somers and Wharton with the sole hope of ruining Harley. In now retiring,

the Secretary's principal mortification would seem to have been the necessity it laid him under of joining an ultra-faction. He made a last attempt to conciliate Cowper and Somers. But the arrangements were made. To the ill-concealed grief and distress of the Queen, he and his friend St. John retired; Robert Walpole entered the ministry; Lord Somers was made Chancellor; and the imperious Duchess of Marlborough thought herself triumphant. She had known Anne now forty years, but she did not know the strength of her sullen obstinacy. In a few months more, the death of the Prince threw fresh power into Whig hands. Somers became President of the Council, and Lord Wharton went to Ireland. He took with him, as Secretary, Mr. Joseph Addison.

Mr. Addison was, at this time, less distinguished by the fame of his writings than by that of his sayings. He was the most popular man in the little commonwealth of Whig wits, who now met nightly (Button's was not yet established) at Will's coffee-house in Covent-garden. They were a kind of off-shoot from the more dignified club who ate mutton-pies at Kit Katt's the pastrycook's; and of which the principal literary members were Congreve, Garth, Vanbrugh, Steele, and Addison. The Revolution gave a new character, in giving new duties, to associations of this kind. They were no longer what they were, when, in this same Will's coffee-house, then called The Rose, Dryden ruled the town wits from his Tory chair. They were a recognised class, with influence before unknown. In sketching the career of De Foe, we have indicated its rise and growth. The people were beginning to be important, and it was the only direct means of communication with the people. Thus the little party at Will's were not sought or courted for the graces of their wit and literature alone. That pale, bright-eyed, sickly, deformed youth of one-and-twenty, whose *Pastorals* are so much talked of just now, may seek them for no better reason; but not for this are they sought by the tall, stern-looking, dark-faced Irish priest, whose forty-two

years of existence have been a struggle of ill-endured dependence and haughty discontent, which he now resolves to redeem in the field of political warfare. Here, meanwhile, he amuses himself and the town with Mr. Bickerstaff's joke against Mr. Partridge, suggesting to hearty Dick Steele those pleasant *Lucubrations* of Isaac, which, in a few months more, are to take the town by storm; or, it may be, showing privately to Addison that sneer against De Foe, worded with such malignant art, which he was about now to give to the world. "One of those authors "(*the fellow who was pilloried, I have forgot his name*) is "indeed so grave, sententious, dogmatical a rogue, that "there is no enduring him."[1] That was it! There was profiting by his labour; there was copying the suggestions of his genius; there was travelling to wealth and power along the path struck out by his martyrdom; but, for this very reason, there was no enduring him. A man who will go into the pillory for his opinions, is not a "clubable" man. Yet, at this very moment, De Foe was labouring for the interests of the literary class. For twenty years he had urged the necessity of a law to protect an author's property in his writings, and in this session the Copyright Act was passed. The common law recognised a perpetual right, but gave no means of enforcing it; the statute limited the right, and gave the means. It was a sort of cheat, but better than unlimited robbery.[2]

[1] He hated him still worse, when he found him writing for Harley on the same side with himself, and became conscious that hack partisans on the other side did not scruple to couple them together, as "fellow-"labourers in the service of the white "Staff." "He paid De Foe better "than he did Swift, looking on him "as the shrewder head of the two for "business," is the reckless assertion of Oldmixon.

[2] I have adverted to this subject in a previous note; but I may add, in a few pregnant sentences from one of De Foe's *Reviews* of this date, a description of the existing abuses of the law:—"Books are printed by nobody, "and wrote by everybody. One man "prints another man's works, and "calls them his own; another man "prints his own and calls them by "the name of another. Continual "robberies, piracies, and invasions "of property occur in the occupation. "One man shall study seven years to "bring a finished piece into the "world; and, as soon as produced,

Notwithstanding Harley's retirement, De Foe continued in the service of Godolphin's Ministry. But at the special desire of Harley himself; to whom, as the person by whom he had first been employed for Anne, and whose apparently falling fortunes were a new claim of attachment, he considered himself bound. "Nay, not so, "Mr. De Foe," said Harley, "I shall not take it ill from "you in the least. Besides, it is the Queen you are serv- "ing, who has been very good to you." The words were well selected for continuance of the tenure by which the sagacious diplomatist had first engaged his services. He went to the Lord Treasurer accordingly, who received him with great friendliness, and told him, "smiling," he had not seen him a long while. De Foe frankly mentioned his obligations to Harley, and his fear that his interest might be lessened on that account. "Not at all, "Mr. De Foe," rejoined Godolphin; "I always think a "man honest till I find the contrary." To which De Foe might have added, without rebuke, in the language he always afterwards used of Harley, "And I shall ever "preserve this principle, that an honest man cannot be "ungrateful to his benefactor." The scrupulous author, nevertheless, considered it his duty, while now again engaged in ministerial employments,[1] entirely to cease

"it shall be republished by some "piratical printer at a quarter of the "price, and sold for his own benefit. "These things call loudly for an act "of parliament."

[1] What these employments exactly were is not now known; but they were thus hinted at by himself, when he defended his conduct after the death of Anne:—"After this reception my "Lord Godolphin had the goodness, not "only to introduce me for the second "time to her Majesty, and to the "honour of kissing her hand, but ob- "tained for me the continuance of "an appointment which her Ma- "jesty had been pleased to make me, "in consideration of a former special "service I had done, and in which I "had run as much risk of my life as "a grenadier upon the counterscarp ". . . . Upon this second introduc- "tion, her Majesty was pleased to tell "me with a goodness peculiar to her- "self, that she had such satisfaction "in my former services that she had "appointed me for another affair, "which was something nice, and that "my Lord Treasurer should tell me "the rest; and so I withdrew. The "next day, his lordship having com- "manded me to attend, told me that "he must send me to Scotland; and "gave me but three days to prepare "myself. Accordingly, I went to "Scotland, where neither my business "nor the manner of my discharging "it is material to this tract; nor will

communication with the rival statesman, till he again appeared as a public minister.

It was not very long. Nor had the Ministry, on the score of moderation at any rate, profited greatly by his absence; while he, by the position of parties, was driven to the extreme of opposition. Despairing of the Queen's power to second her well-known inclination, the High Church trumpet had again sounded to battle, and De Foe had again buckled on his armour of offence against both ultra-parties. Again, as he says himself, he went on freely telling offensive truths, regarding no censures, fearing no prosecutions, asking no favour of any man, making no court to any, and expecting not to oblige even those whom he thought the best of. It was now he told the world that fate of the unbiassed writer, with which a celebrated journal of modern days has familiarized its readers. "If "I might give a short hint to an impartial writer, it "should be to tell him his fate. If he resolves to venture "upon the dangerous precipice of telling unbiassed truths, "let him proclaim war with mankind, *à la mode le pays de* "*Pole*, neither to give nor take quarter. If he tells the "crimes of great men, they fall upon him with the iron "hands of the law; if he tells them of their virtues, "when they have any, then the mob attacks him with "slander. But if he regards truth, let him expect "martyrdom on both sides, and then he may go on fear-"less. *And this is the course I take myself.*" It was now, describing his personal treatment by one of the Tory mobs, he told them the destiny of all who had ever served them. "He that will help you, must be hated "and neglected by you, must be mobbed and plundered

"it be ever any part of my character "that I reveal what should be con-"cealed. And yet my errand was "such as was far from being unfit for "a sovereign to direct, or an honest "man to perform; and the service I "did upon that occasion, as it is not "unknown to the greatest man "now in the nation under the King "and the Prince, so, I dare say, his "Grace was never displeased with the "part I had in it, and I hope will not "forget it." The last allusion, I need hardly say, is to the Duke of Marlborough.

" for you, must starve and hang for you, and must yet " help you. *And thus I do.*"

We could give numberless instances from the *Review* itself, if space permitted; but, limited as we are in this respect, it will perhaps suffice if we turn to the *Diary* of Luttrell, and take a note or two from that voluminous record as the mere type or indication of a petty persecution, quite wonderful for its eager activity, which from month to month, and year to year, was incessantly directed against this indomitable man. On one occasion, Tuesday the 15th of October 1706, Luttrell tells us (vi. 98) that Daniel De Foe was carried before the Lord Chief Justice Holt, for " inserting a speech in his *Review* relating to " the Union, pretending the same was made by a great " lawyer, and was bound over for the same, himself in " 200*l*, and two sureties in 100*l* each." A year later, the same pains-taking authority informs us (vi. 215-16), the Swedish envoy had complained against De Foe for reflecting on his master in his *Reviews* of the 9th and 28th of August, and the 2nd of September; and in consequence thereof, on Tuesday the 23rd of September 1707 (the same night on which his old antagonist, Tutchin of the *Observator*, died), there went into Scotland " an order to take into " custody Daniel De Foe for reflecting on the King of " Sweden in his *Review*." Again, not a month later, Luttrell tells us (under date of Saturday the 18th of October) that the Muscovite ambassador has complained against Daniel De Foe for the following expression in his *Review* of the preceding Thursday, " *Money makes Christians fight for the* " *Turks, money hires servants to the Devil, nay,* TO THE VERY " CZAR OF MUSCOVY." As to which, on the next following Tuesday, the same trustworthy person further relates that, " The Earl of Sunderland has writ to the Muscovite Am- " bassador here, that he will take care the author of the " *Review* shall be prosecuted for the reflection upon his " master." And so the prosecution and persecution went on, and so went on De Foe; mobbed and plundered by those whom he opposed, disliked and neglected by those

whom he served, but expecting from both sides the martyrdom he received, and therefore still going on fearless.

But now suddenly came again upon the scene De Foe's old friend Dr. Henry Sacheverell. This brawling priest attacked Godolphin in the pulpit by the name of Volpone; inveighed against Burnet and other bishops for not unfurling the bloody flag against Dissent; abused the Revolution as unrighteous; and broadly reasserted non-resistance and passive obedience. The fellow was such a fool and madman that a serious thought should not have been wasted on *him*, whatever might be reckoned needful to discountenance his atrocious doctrines. This was the feeling of De Foe. When Harley called the sermon a "circumgyration of incoherent words" (in a speech thought to merit the same description), it seems to have been his feeling too. It was certainly that of Lord Somers, and of the best men in the cabinet. They all knew his noisy ignorance. His illustration of "parallel lines meeting in "a centre," was a standing joke with the wits. But *Volpone* stuck to Godolphin, and an impeachment was resolved upon. The Minister little thought, when he took to what Burnet calls the luxury of roasting a parson, that the fire would blaze high enough to roast himself and his colleagues.

Harley made a shrewder guess. He was dining with a friend in the country when the news reached him. "The "game is up!" he cried; left the dinner-table, and hurried to London. In vain De Foe still urged, "let us have "the crime punished, not the man. The bar of the House "of Commons is the worst pillory in the nation." In that elevated pillory, Sacheverell was placed; well dressed, with clean gloves, with white handkerchief well managed, and with other suitable accomplishments;—Atterbury, who secretly despised him, in affected sympathy by his side; the mob without, screaming for their martyr; and women, high and low, frantic with admiration. "You could never "embark the ladies," said De Foe, "till you fell upon the "clergy. As soon as you pinch the parson, the women

"are one woman in his defence." His description of the interest created by the impeachment is one of his happiest pieces of quiet irony. It has also historic value. The ladies, he tells us, laid aside their chocolate, their china, and their gallantries, for State business; the Tatler, the immortal Tatler, the great Bickerstaff himself (to whom, let us remark by the way, De Foe, in his hearty admiration,[1] had lately resigned the offices of his own Scandal Club), was fain to leave off talking to them; they had no leisure for Church; little Miss, still obliged to go, had the Doctor's picture put into her prayer-book; even Punch laid aside his domestic broils, to gibber for the holy man; and not only were the churches thinned, and the parks, but the very playhouses felt the effects, and Betterton died a beggar. Well had it been, however, if this were all. A series of horrible riots followed. Meeting-houses were pulled down; the bloody flag was in reality unfurled; mounted escorts, carrying martyr Sacheverell about the country, were everywhere the signal for the plunder and outrage of Dissenters; the martyr's printed defence (filled with abuse of De Foe and his *Reviews*) circulated by tens of thousands; and Lord Treasurer Godolphin was ordered to break his staff, and make way for Robert Harley.

He took office; and at once began the work, which, whatever the motives we assign to him, and whatever the just faults we may find with the absence of decision in his mind and in his temper, we must admit that he continued to the last, of opposing, against his own interests, the exterminating policy of the party who had borne him

[1] This feeling led him soon after to condemn Steele for taking any public notice of his quondam friend Swift's vituperation. "For my part," he says, "I have always thought that "the weakest step the Tatler ever took, "*if that complete author can be said to "have done anything weak*, was to "stoop to take the least notice of the "barkings of the animals that have "conloled him, examined him, &c. He "should have let envy bark, and fools "rail; and, according to his own "observation of the fable of the sun, "continued to shine on. This I have "found to be agreeable to the true "notion of contempt. Silence is the "utmost slight nature can dictate to a "man, and the most insupportable for "a vain man to bear."

into power. While several leading Whigs yet retained office, he again unsuccessfully attempted a coalition with Cowper and Walpole; and it was not until wholly rebuffed in this quarter that he completed his High Tory cabinet, and determined to risk a dissolution. St. John was made secretary; Harcourt had the great seal; and he himself took the treasurer's staff. The elections gave him a majority, though not very decisive; and Anne's celebrated Last Administration began its career. A man might predict in some sort the course of it, who had seen the new Premier on the first of October; the day before the meeting of Parliament. He was not at the palace of the Queen, nor in his office of business with Harcourt or St. John; but he was stopping in his coach at the St. James's coffee-house, to set down Jonathan Swift. "He knew my Christian name very well," says the *Journal to Stella*. On that day the reverend ex-Whig partisan had sent forth a lampoon against Godolphin, and had paid his first visit to Harley. On the 4th he dined with him. Afterwards, his visits were daily welcomed. The proud and long-neglected Priest found himself, on one and the same hopeful October day, dining for tenpence in his old chop-house; then going "reeking" from thence to the first minister of state; and then, in charity, sending a Tatler to Steele, "who is very low of late." Others were "low" too. There was Congreve, a resolute Whig and member of the Kit Katt, whose little place depended on the Ministry. But Harley quieted his fears with a happy quotation from Virgil:

> Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora Pœni,
> Nec tam aversus equos Tyriâ sol jungit ab urbe.[1]

Whatever else, then, were the objections to this statesman, they did not lie on the score of his indifference to genius. The Administration organised, he sent for De

[1] "Our hearts are not so cold, nor flames the fire
"Of Sol so distant from the race of Tyre."

Foe. A different course was needed with Daniel from that which had been taken with Jonathan. Harley knew De Foe thoroughly: and was certainly not sorry to know that the High Church majority in the Commons might have been much larger but for his unwearied personal and public exertions against that faction, in the elections recently closed. De Foe distinctly states the result of the interview to have been, that he capitulated for liberty to speak according to his own judgment of things, and that he had this liberty allowed him. Nor did he wait on Harley till he had first consulted the dismissed Godolphin, who counselled him to consider himself as the Queen's servant, to wait until he saw things settled, and then to take her Majesty's commands from the new minister. In the same tone Harley conferred with him now. And if we couple the interview with the paper sent forth in the *Review* which first opened the fury of the Whig batteries on De Foe, we shall find every thing to confirm the impression here taken of it; as well of the character of Harley himself, as of the honourable grounds of De Foe's conditional support. He states his opinion to be, that the Ministry must be carried on upon the foundation, and with the principles, of the Revolution. This, he adds, even though with it should come the fate of pleasing and displeasing all parties in their turn, can be the only safe guide where so many parties alternately govern, and where men of the same party have so often been of several opinions about the same thing. If, on the other hand, they reject such guidance, another kind of language would have to be talked to them. "For, let "not governors flatter themselves, nor people be dismayed "—the Revolution cannot be overthrown in Britain. It "is not in the power of ministry or party, prince or "parliament, to do it. If the attempt is made, let them "look to it that venture upon the attempt. The People "of England have tasted Liberty, and I cannot think "they will bear the exchange." He then says explicitly, that he shall not go along with the Ministry unless they

go along with him. He exults in Harley's known inclination to the Whigs; and indeed he argues that the Constitution is of such a nature, that, whoever may be in it, if they are faithful to their duty, "*it will either "find them Whigs or make them so.*" In short, he lays it down as a truth not to be disputed, that they all had but one interest as Englishmen, whatever interest they might have as to parties.

And upon these plain principles Daniel De Foe acted. They were principles professed by Swift two years later; but never, we regret to say, whether later or earlier, implicitly acted on by him. "I bear all the Ministry to be my "witnesses," he wrote to Steele, in whose *Correspondence* the letter may be found, "that there is hardly a man of "wit of the adverse party, whom I have not been so bold "as to recommend often and with earnestness to them; "for I think principles at present are quite out of the "case, and that we dispute wholly about persons. In "these last, you and I differ; but in the other, I think "we agree; for I have in print professed myself in politics "to be what we formerly called a Whig." And in two months from the date of the letter, he was covering this very Dick Steele with the most lavish contempt, for no better reason than that he held Whig principles. But he wrote for power, and got it; while De Foe wrote for what he believed to be the public service, and got no reward but the consciousness of having done so.

Compare Swift's *Examiner* with De Foe's *Review*, and the distinction is yet more plain. It is earnest and manly reasoning against a series of reckless libels. Libels, too, in which the so-called advocate of Harley is denounced by Harley's confidential friend as an *illiterate idiot*. "Much wit in that," quietly answered De Foe; who never was seduced into party lampooning, who held that no difference of opinion should discharge the obligation of good manners,[1] and who, even at moments like

[1] At a time when De Foe was engaged in his bitterest political controversy, it is for ever to be recorded to his honour, in that age of habitual

these, held Swift's wit and genius in honour. "Now, I "know a learned man at this time, an orator in the Latin, "a walking Index of books, who has all the libraries in "Europe in his head, from the Vatican at Rome to the "learned collection of Doctor Salmon at Fleet Ditch; "but he is a cynic in behaviour, a fury in temper, unpolite "in conversation, abusive in language, and ungovernable "in passion. Is this to be learned? Then may I still "be illiterate. I have been in my time pretty well master "of five languages, and have not lost them yet, though I "write no bill over my door, nor set Latin quotations in "any part of the *Review*. But, to my irreparable loss, I "was bred only by halves; for my father, forgetting "Juno's royal academy, left the language of Billingsgate "quite out of my education. Hence I am, in the polite "style of the street, perfectly *illiterate;* and am not fit to "converse with the porters and carmen of quality, who "adorn their diction with the beauties of calling names, "and cursing their neighbour with a *bonne grace*. I have "had the honour to fight a rascal, but never could muster "the eloquence of calling a man so." This was the manly and calm spirit of every return vouchsafed by the author of the *Review* to the cross-fire that now assailed him. He was content, whether defending or opposing, to stand Alone.

libel and reckless personal abuse, that he thus wrote to his antagonist: "But to state the matter fairly be- "tween you and me, as writing for "different interests, and so possibly "coming under an unavoidable neces- "sity of jarring in several cases, I am "ready to make a fair truce of honour "with you, viz. that if what either "party are doing or saying may clash "with the party we are for, and urge "us to speak, it shall be done without "naming either's name, and without "personal reflections; and thus we "may differ still, and yet preserve "both the Christian and the gentle- "man. This, I think, is an offer "may satisfy you. I have not been "desirous of giving just offence to "you, neither would I to any man, "however I may differ from him; "and I see no reason why I should "affront a man's person because I do "not join with him in principle. "I always thought that men might "dispute without railing, and dif- "fer without quarrelling, and that "opinions need not affect our temper." Most admirably and wisely did he say on another occasion, in reference to the same vile habit of personal re-crimination, "I have always care- "fully avoided lashing any man's "private infirmities, as being too "sensible of my own."

He did not think the Brothers' Club had helped the Ministry, nor that the Scriblerus Club would be of any service to Literature. He preferred to stand where he did; "unplaced, unpensioned, no man's heir or slave;" in frank and free communication with his countrymen. And therefore was he assailed by Tory scribes on the one hand, and by Whig scribes on the other, who could yet only join their attacks on the one point of accusing him of a hankering after place. "And what place do I write for?" he pleasantly asked. "I have not yet inquired whether "there is a vacancy in the press-yard; but I know of no "place anybody could think I should be writing for, "unless it be a place in Newgate, for this truly may be "the fate of any body that dare to speak plainly to men "in power." The same charge had been brought against him while yet the old Whigs held office. "As to places, "I have been seven years under what we call a Whig "government, and have not been a stranger to men in "power. I have had the honour to be told I served that "government; the fury of an enraged party has given "their testimony to it, and I could produce yet greater; "but the man is not alive of whom I have sought pre-"ferment or reward. If I have espoused a wrong cause; "if I have acted in a good cause in an unfair manner; "if I have, for fear, favour, or by the bias of any man in "the world, great or small, acted against what I always "professed, or what is the known interest of the nation; "if I have any way abandoned that glorious principle of "truth and liberty, which I ever was embarked in, and "which I trust I shall never, through fear or hope, step "one inch back from,—if I have done thus, then, as "Job says in another case, 'Let thistles grow instead "'of wheat, and cockles instead of barley;' then, and "not till then, may I be esteemed a mercenary, a "missionary, a spy, or what you please. But, if the "cause be just, if it be the peace, security, and happiness "of both nations, if I have done it honestly and effectually "—how does it alter the case if I have been fairly

"encouraged, supported, and rewarded in the work, as "God knows I have not? Does the mission disable "the messenger, or does it depend upon the merit of the "message?"[1]

And now, as the best comment we can make upon this manly avowal, let us briefly state De Foe's debtor-and-creditor account with the Administration of Robert Harley.

He supported him against the October Club; a party of a hundred country gentlemen, who drank October ale, and would have driven things to extremes against the Whigs. He supported him against the bigot Rochester; and against the fiery, impatient Bolingbroke. He supported him against the Whigs; when the Whigs, to avenge their party disappointments, laid aside their noblest principles, and voted with Lord Findlater for the dissolution of the Scottish Union. He supported him also against the Whigs, when, for no nobler reason, they joined with his old enemy Lord Nottingham, to oppress

[1] His experiences derived from such support as he had given Harley's government, were very happily stated in another of his writings. After telling the story of a malcontent, "of "a reign not many years behind us" (whether he wrote *Postboys* or *Examiners*, De Foe humorously interposes, authors are not agreed), who, when an argument was brought a little too close to him, said, "Sir, "you would rail as I do, if you were "not bribed;" to which the other replied, "Ay, and you would be "quieter than I, if anybody would "bribe you;"—he proceeds to remark: "Three sorts of men always "rail at a Government. First, those "whose opinion of their own merit "makes them think they are never "well enough rewarded. The second "sort are those, who, having enjoyed "favours, but being found unworthy, "are discarded from their offices; "these always rail as if they had "never been obliged. But we have "a third sort of people who always "go with their mouths open, in order "to have them stopped; like a sort "of dogs I have met with, that, when "they attend under your table, bark "that they may be fed. I remember "a man of some note who practised "this with great success, and canted "a long while in the House of Com-"mons about abuses in the manage-"ment, misapplying the public "treasure, making felonious treaties, "and the like; but a wise old fox "no sooner halved his den to this "badger, but he put a stop to the "clamour, and the nation's treasure "was never misapplied since, because "a good share of it ran his way." The wise old reynard was Sir Stephen Fox, and the quieted badger a certain notorious place-hunter of the parliament of William and Anne, Mr. John Howe MP, whom Sir Stephen made joint paymaster of the forces with himself.

and disable the Dissenters. And again he supported him against the Whigs, when, speaking through their ablest and most liberal representatives, the Walpoles and the Stanhopes, they declared emphatically, and in all circumstances, for a total prohibition of trade with France. It was on this latter question De Foe would seem to have incurred their most deadly hatred. He had achieved the repute of a great authority in matters of the kind; and he threw it all into the scale in favour of Bolingbroke's treaty. He wrote on it often and largely; with eminent ability, and with great effect. His view briefly was, that the principle of a free trade, unencumbered by prohibitions, and with very moderate duties, was "not only "equal and just, but proceeding on the true interest of "trade, and much more to the advantage of Britain than "of France."[1] What disadvantages of unpopularity such reasoning had then to contend with, we need not say; the cry of Trade and Wool did as much for the Whigs, as that of Sacheverell and the Church had done for the Tories; but De Foe opposed both alike, and it is not very probable that he will be traduced for it now.

But we have not yet stated the reverse of his account in connection with Robert Harley's Administration. It is not less honourable to him.

He did not oppose the Peace when settled; but while it was in progress he opposed the terms. He desired peace; but he did not think the Spanish guarantees sufficient. He thought that Europe had been saved by the policy of William and the Whigs, and by the genius of

[1] He argued this question of Free Trade, which he dealt with in a spirit greatly in advance of his time, chiefly in a government paper called the *Mercator*, set on foot by Harley, in which he had no personal or pecuniary interest, and over which (though he was very unjustly made responsible for all its contents) he exercised no control; but to whose pages he contributed a series of most remarkable papers on commercial subjects. It is now extraordinarily scarce. When Mr. Wilson published his Life of De Foe, he had not been able to get sight of a copy. One of the very few in existence belongs to my friend Mr. Crossley of Manchester, who justly describes it as "replete with the "vigour, the life and animation, the "various and felicitous power of "illustration, which this great and "truly English author could impart to "any subject."

Marlborough; but he did not approve of the violent method of winding up the war. He was, in short, glad when it was done, but would have been ashamed to take part in doing it: and the best judgment of posterity, we believe, confirms that judgment. He opposed the creation of Peers. He opposed strongly, while the Whigs made the feeblest resistance, the Parliamentary Qualification act; which he condemned for a lurking tendency to give preponderance to the landed interest. He opposed the Occasional Conformity bill; though his position respecting it was such that he *might* fairly have kept his peace. He opposed the Tax upon Papers; and bitterly denounced the malignant attack upon the press which signalised Bolingbroke's few days' Ministry. He concentrated all his strength of opposition against the same statesman's Schism bill; in which an attempt was made to deprive Dissenters of all share in the work of education, grounded precisely on those preposterous High Church claims which we have seen flagrantly revived in more recent days. Let us show, by a memorable passage from the *Review*, how little Church pretensions and extravagances alter, while all else alters around them. "Who "are they that at this juncture are so clamorous against "Dissenters, and are eagerly soliciting for a further "security to the Church? Are they not that part of the "clergy who have already made manifest advances towards "the synagogue of Rome? they who preach the inde-"pendency of the Church on the State? who urge the "necessity of auricular confession, sacerdotal absolution, "extreme unction, and prayer for the dead? who expressly "teach the real presence in the Lord's Supper, which they "will have to be a proper sacrifice? and who contend for "the practice of rebaptising, wherein they overshoot the "Papists themselves? Are they not they who are loudly "clamorous for those church lands which, to the unspeak-"able detriment of the public, were in the days of igno-"rance given to impudent begging friars?" Finally, when it was whispered about that the leading Ministers

were intriguing for the succession of the Pretender; and when it was reported everywhere that the manifesto of the Jacobites against a Protestant succession lay splendidly bound in the Queen's closet at Windsor; De Foe wrote and published those three pamphlets, which, for prompt wit and timely satire, may be classed with his best efforts: *A Seasonable Caution.—What if the Pretender should come?*—and *What if the Queen should die?*

It is almost inconceivable that the Whigs should have led the cry against him on the score of these admirable pieces; but it is another proof of the blindness of party malice. The men of whose principles throughout life he had been the sturdiest advocate, were the Dissenters and the Whigs; and as he had to thank the one for his earliest experience of a prison, for his latest he had now to thank the other. A great Whig light, Mr. Auditor Benson, commenced a prosecution against him, at his private cost, for desiring by these works to favour the Jacobite succession; their mode of recommending the Jacobite succession having been, to say that it would confer on every one the privilege of wearing wooden shoes, and ease the nobility and gentry of the hazard and expense of winter journeys to Parliament! But dulness had the odds against wit, in this as in the former instance; and the prosecutors had no difficulty in finding judges to tell De Foe, "that they contained matter for which he might be "hanged, drawn, and quartered." He was accordingly thrown again into Newgate; and might possibly again have been taken from thence to the pillory, but for the interposition of Harley, now Lord Oxford. He represented the matter to the Queen; and made known to De Foe the opinion expressed by Anne. "She saw nothing but private "pique in it." A pardon was issued by Bolingbroke, and the prisoner released. But not until, with an instinct that the end was now approaching, he had brought his *Review* to a close, within the hard ungenial walls wherein it had begun. It was with a somewhat sorrowful retrospect he closed it, but not without a dignified content. There

were two sorts of people out of reach by the world, he said—those that are above, and those that are below it; they might be equally happy, for aught he knew; and between them he was not unwilling to accept the lot, which, as it placed him below envy, yet lifted him far above pity. In the school of affliction, he bethought him he had learned more philosophy than at the academy, and more divinity than from the pulpit; in prison he had learned to know that liberty does not consist in open doors, or the free egress and regress of locomotion. He had seen the rough and smooth sides of the world, and tasted the difference between the closet of a King and the Newgate dungeon. Here, in the dungeon, he had still, "with humblest acknowledgments," to remember that a glorious Prince had "loved" him; and, whatever Fortune had still in store, he felt himself not unfit, by all this discipline, for serious application to the great, solemn, and weighty work, of resignation to the will of Heaven.

George I and George II. 1714—1731.

THE cheerful and pious resignation for which De Foe had so prepared himself, he needed when the crisis came. It is not our province here to dwell on the memorable scenes of 1714, which consigned Oxford to the Tower and Bolingbroke to exile; shattered the Tory Party; settled the succession of Hanover; and fixed the Whigs in power. The principles for which De Foe had contended all his life were at last securely established; and for his reward he had to show the unnoticed and unprotected scars 'of thirty-two years' incessant political conflict. But he retired as he had kept the field —with a last hearty word for his patron Harley; and with a manly defence against the factious slanders which had opened on himself. He probably heard the delighted scream of Mr. Boyer as his figure disappeared; to the effect of how fully he had been "confuted by the ingenious "and judicious Joseph Addison, esquire." Doubtless he also smiled to observe what Whig rewards for pure Whig

service were now most plentifully scattered. The ingenious Joseph Addison, esquire, Secretary of State; Mr. Steele, Sir Richard and Surveyor of the royal stables; Mr. Tickell, Irish Secretary; Mr. Congreve, twelve hundred a-year; Mr. Rowe, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Ambrose Phillips, all snugly and comfortably sinecured. For himself, he was in his fifty-fourth year; and, after a life of bodily and mental exertion that would have worn down a score of ordinary men, had to begin life anew.

Into that new life we shall enter but briefly. It is plain to all the world. It is the life by which he became immortal. It is contained in the excellent books which are named at the head of this article; and there the world may read it, if they will. What we sought to exhibit here, we trust we have made sufficiently obvious. After all the objections that may be justly made to his opinions, on the grounds of shortcoming or excess, we believe that in the main features of the career we have set before the reader, will be recognised a noble English example of the qualities most prized by Englishmen. De. Foe is our only famous politician and man of letters, who represented, in its inflexible constancy, sturdy dogged resolution, unwearied perseverance, and obstinate contempt of danger and of tyranny, the great Middle-class English character. We believe it to be no mere national pride to say, that, whether in its defects or its surpassing merits, the world has had none other to compare with it. He lived in the thickest stir of the conflict of the four most violent party reigns of English history; and if we have at last entered into peaceful possession of most part of the rights at issue in those party struggles, it the more becomes us to remember such a man with gratitude, and with wise consideration for what errors we may find in him. He was too much in the constant heat of the battle, to see all that we see now. He was not a philosopher himself, but he helped philosophy to some wise conclusions. He did not stand at the highest point of toleration, or of moral wisdom; but, with his masculine active arm, he helped to

lift his successors over obstructions which had stayed his own advance. He stood, in his opinions and in his actions, alone and apart from his fellow men; but it was to show his fellow men of later times the value of a juster and larger fellowship, and of more generous modes of action. And when he now retreated from the world Without to the world Within, in the solitariness of his unrewarded service and integrity, he had assuredly earned the right to challenge the higher recognition of Posterity. He was walking towards History with steady feet; and might look up into her awful face with a brow unabashed and undismayed.

Here was his language, when, withdrawn finally and for ever from the struggle, he calmly reviewed the part he had taken in it. "I was, from my first entering into the "knowledge of public matters, and have ever been to this "day, a sincere lover of the constitution of my country; "zealous for Liberty and the Protestant interest: but a "constant follower of moderate principles, and a vigorous "opposer of hot measures in all. I never once changed my "opinion, my principles, or my party; and let what will "be said of changing sides, this I maintain, that I never "once deviated from the Revolution principles, nor from "the doctrine of liberty and property on which it was "founded." Describing the qualities that should distinguish a man who, in those critical times, elected so to treat of public affairs, he added: "Find him where you "will, this must be his character. He must be one that, "searching into the depths of truth, dare speak her aloud "in the most dangerous times; that fears no face, courts "no favour, is subject to no interest, bigoted to no party, "and will be a hypocrite for no gain. *I will not say I am "the man. I leave that to posterity.*"

His last political Essay was written in 1715; and while the proof-sheets lay uncorrected before him, he was struck with apoplexy. After some months' danger he rallied; and in the three following years sent forth a series of works, chiefly moral and religious, and of which

the *Family Instructor* and the *Religious Courtship* may be mentioned as the types, which were excellently adapted to a somewhat limited purpose, and are still in very high esteem. They are far too numerous even for recital here. They had extraordinary popularity; went through countless editions; and found their way not only in handsome setting-forth to the King's private library, but on rough paper to all the fairs and markets of the kingdom. In the fact that Goldsmith makes his lively Livy Primrose as thoroughly acquainted with the dialogue in *Religious Courtship*, as she is with the argument of man Friday and his master in *Robinson Crusoe*, and with the disputes of Thwackum and Square in *Tom Jones*, we may see in what vogue they continued to that date. But beyond, and up to the beginning of the century, they were generally among the standard prize books of schools; and might be seen lying in coarse workman-garb, with *Pomfret's Poems* or *Hervey's Meditations*, on the window-seat of any tradesman's house. Grave moral and religious questions had, in truth, not before been approached with anything like that dramatic liveliness of manner. To the same popularity were also in later years committed, such half-satirical, half-serious books, as the *Political History of the Devil;* of which, strong plain sense, and a desire to recommend, by liveliness of treatment, the most homely and straightforward modes of looking into moral and religious questions, were again the distinguishing characteristics. Other works of miscellaneous interest will be found recited in the careful catalogue of De Foe's writings (upwards of two hundred in all) compiled by Mr. Walter Wilson. The most remarkable of these was probably the *Complete English Tradesman*, in which you see distinctly reflected many of the most solid and striking points of De Foe's own character; and, let us add, of the general character of our middle-class countrymen. The plays of Heywood, Massinger, and Ben Jonson, do not give us the citizens of their time more vividly, nor better contrast the staidness and the follies of old and of young, than De Foe

has here accomplished for the traders of William and Anne. We are surprised to be told that this book was less popular than others of its class; but perhaps a certain surly vein of satire which was in it, was the reason. A book which tends, however justly, to satirize any community in general, readers included, is dangerous to its author's popularity, however the public may like satire in particular, or when aimed at special classes. Our hasty summary would be incomplete, without a reference to his many publications on points of domestic economy, and questions of homely, domestic morals; to his occasional satires in verse; or to a timely and powerful series of strictures on London Life, in which he earnestly suggested the necessity of a Metropolitan University, of a Foundling Hospital, and of a well-organised system of Police. He also again attacked the stage on the success of the *Beggar's Opera*; and here, confusing a little the prose and poetry of the matter, made that excellent piece responsible for a coarse drama on the subject of the recently hanged Jack Sheppard.[1] In this discussion he again encountered his old enemy, now the Dean of St. Patrick's;

[1] "Our rogues," he says, "are "grown more wicked than ever; and "vice of all kinds is so much winked "at, that robbery is accounted a "pretty crime. We take pains to "puff them up in their villainy, and "there is one set out in so amiable a "light in the *Beggar's Opera*, it has "taught them to value themselves on "their profession, rather than to be "ashamed of it. Not content with "the mischief done by the *Beggar's* "*Opera*, we must have a *Quaker's* "*Opera* forsooth, of much more evil "tendency than the former: for in "this, Jack Sheppard is made the "head of the drama, and runs "through such a scene of riot and "success, that but too many weak "minds have been drawn away; and "many unwary persons so charmed "with his appearance on the stage, "dressed in that elegant manner, and "his pockets so well lined, they have "forthwith commenced street-robbers "or housebreakers; so that every "idle fellow, weary of honest labour, "need but fancy himself a Macheath "or a Sheppard, and there's a rogue "at once." It is rather curious that in the same pamphlet De Foe makes a concession we would hardly have expected from his earlier opposition to all stage performances. "Since "example has so much force," he says, "the stage should exhibit "nothing but what might be repre-"sented before a bishop. They may "be merry and wise; let them take "the *Provoked Husband* for a pat-"tern." Gay sneered at De Foe as a fellow who had excellent natural parts, but wanted a small foundation of learning, and as a lively instance of those wits who, as an ingenious author says, "will endure

and, moving the spleen of Swift's dearest friend, got himself niched in the *Dunciad*. But the assailant lived to regret it more than the assailed, and to confess to his friend Spence, that out of all the countless works written by "restless Daniel," there was not one that did not contain some good—in other words, that did not brand reproach on the man who had stigmatised their author as a dunce.

Meanwhile, concurrently with these works, there had appeared a more memorable series from the same untiring hand. In 1719, being then in his fifty-eighth year, he had given *Robinson Crusoe* to the world; but not until he had first wearily gone the round of all the trade, and at last, with enormous difficulty, had found a purchaser and publisher. Paternoster Row is not bound to find out the value of genius, until it begins to sell. With *Robinson Crusoe's* successors there was less difficulty. In 1720 he had published the *Life and Piracies of Captain Singleton*; the *Dumb Philosopher*; and *Duncan Campbell*. In 1721, the *Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders*. In 1722, the *Life and Adventures of Colonel Jack*; and the *Journal of the Plague Year*. In 1723, the *Memoirs of a Cavalier*. In 1724, *Roxana*. In 1725, the *New Voyage round the World*. And in 1728, the *Life of Captain Carleton*. He was at work upon a new production at the close of 1729, as we shall shortly see, and apologises to his printer for having delayed the proofs through "exceeding illness." It never appeared.

Of *Robinson Crusoe* it is needless to speak. Was there ever any thing written by mere man but this, asked Doctor Johnson, that was wished longer by its readers? It is a standard piece in every European language; its popularity has extended to every civilized nation. The traveller Burckhardt found it translated into Arabic, and heard it read aloud among the wandering tribes in the

"but one skimming:" with which sneer the judicious reader may probably be disposed to connect the passage just quoted from De Foe about Gay's masterpiece.

cool hours of evening. It is devoured by every boy; and, as long as a boy remains in the world, he will clamour for *Robinson Crusoe*. It sinks into the bosom while the bosom is most capable of pleasurable impressions from the adventurous and the marvellous; and no human work, we honestly believe, has afforded such great delight. Neither the *Iliad* nor the *Odyssey*, in the much longer course of ages, has incited so many to enterprise, or to reliance on their own powers and capacities. It is the romance of solitude and self-sustainment; and could only so perfectly have been written by a man whose own life[1] had for the most part been passed in the independence of

[1] That De Foe in some sort intended the adventures even of the first part of Robinson Crusoe as a kind of type of what the dangers and vicissitudes and surprising escapes of his own life had been, appears to be confessed in his *Crusoe's Serious Reflections*. Towards the close of that book this unmistakeable passage occurs :—"Had "the common way of writing a man's "history been taken, and I had "given you the conduct or life of a "man you knew, and whose misfor-"tunes and infirmities perhaps you "had sometimes unjustly triumphed "over, all I could have said would "have yielded no diversion, and per-"haps scarce have obtained a reading, "or at best no attention; the teacher, "like a greater, having no honour in "his own country." But more explicit and remarkable still is the preface to this same work, in which, speaking of the objection that had been urged against the former volumes of *Robinson Crusoe* as wholly fictitious, he adds that "the story, "though allegorical, is also historical. "It is the beautiful representation of "a life of unexampled misfortunes, "and of a variety not to be met with "in the world. Farther, there is a "man alive, and well known too, "the actions of whose life are the "subject of these volumes, and to "whom all or most part of the story "most directly alludes." He then recounts a number of particulars necessary for the purposes of his narrative, and says: "The adventures "of Robinson Crusoe are one whole "scene of real life of eight-and-"twenty years, spent in the most "wandering, desolate, and afflicting "circumstances that ever a man went "through, and in which I have lived so "long a life of wonders, in continual "storms; fought with the worst "kind of savages and man-eaters, by "unaccountable surprising incidents; "fed by miracles greater than that "of ravens; suffered all manner of "violences and oppressions, injurious "reproaches, contempt of men, at-"tacks of devils, corrections from "heaven, and oppositions on earth; "have had innumerable ups and "downs in matters of fortune, been "in worse slavery than Turkish, "escaped by as exquisite manage-"ment as that in the story of Xury "and the boat of Salee, been taken "up at sea in distress, raised again "and depressed again, and that "oftener perhaps in one man's life "than ever was known before; ship-"wrecked often, though more by "land than by sea;—in a word, "there is not a circumstance in the "imaginary story but has its just "allusion to a real story, and chimes "part for part, and step for step, "with the inimitable life of Robinson "Crusoe."

unaided thought, accustomed to great reverses, of inexhaustible resource in confronting calamities, leaning ever on his Bible in sober and satisfied belief, and not afraid at any time to find himself Alone, in communion with nature and with God. Nor need we here repeat, what has been said so well by many critics, that the secret of its fascination is its Reality. The same is to be said, in a no less degree, of the *History of the Plague;* which, for the grandeur of the theme and the profoundly affecting familiarity of its treatment, for the thrilling and homely touches which paint at once the moral and the physical terrors of a pestilence, is one of the noblest prose epics of the language. These are the masterpieces of De Foe. These are the works wherein his power is at the highest, and which place him not less among the practical benefactors than among the great writers of our race. "Why, this "man could have founded a colony as well as governed it," said a statesman of the succeeding century, amazed at the knowledge of various kinds, and at the intimate acquaintance with all useful arts, displayed in *Robinson Crusoe.* Nor, within the more limited range they occupy, is power less manifest in his other fictions. While undoubtedly open to objections on a different score, the *Moll Flanders*, the *Colonel Jack*, and the *Roxana*, are not less decisive examples of a wonderful genius. In their day, too, they had no unwise or hurtful effect; for certainly they had a tendency to produce a more indulgent morality, and larger fair play to bad and good. That we question the wisdom of now reviving them as they were written, we will frankly confess; but as models of fictitious narrative, in common with all the writings of De Foe, they are supreme. The art of natural story-telling, which can discard every resort to mere writing or reflection, and rest solely on what people, in peculiar situations, say and do, just as if there were no reader to hear all about it, has had no such astonishing illustrations. High authorities have indeed thought them entitled to still higher dignity. Some one asked Doctor Robertson to advise him as to a

good historical style. "Read De Foe," replied the great historian. Colonel Jack's life has been commonly reprinted in the genuine accounts of highwaymen; Lord Chatham thought the Cavalier a real person, and his description of the civil wars the best in the language; Doctor Mead quoted the book upon the Plague as the narrative of an eyewitness; and Doctor Johnson sat up all night over Captain Carleton's memoirs, as a new work of English history he wondered not to have seen before. In particular scenes, too, of the three tales we are more immediately considering (those of the prison in *Moll Flanders*, of Susannah in *Roxana*, and of the boyhood in *Colonel Jack*), the highest masters of prose fiction have never surpassed them either in power or in pathos, in the subtle portraiture of humanity or in a profound acquaintance with life. But it will remain the chief distinction of De Foe to have been, in these minor tales of English scenes and manners, the father of the illustrious family of the English Novel. Swift directly copied from him; Richardson founded his style of minute narrative wholly upon him; Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and Goldsmith,—Godwin, Scott, Bulwer, and Dickens,—have been more or less indebted to him. Shall we scruple to add, then, that while he remains unapproached in his two great masterpieces, he has been surpassed in his minor works by these his successors? His language is as easy and copious, but less elegant and harmonious; his insight into character is as penetrating, but not so penetrating into the heart; his wit and irony are as playful, but his humour is less genial and expansive; and he wants the delicate fancy, the richness of imagery, the sympathy, the truth and depth of feeling, which will keep the later Masters of our English Novel the delightful companions, the gentle monitors, the welcome instructors, of future generations. So true it is, that every great writer promotes the next great writer one step; and in some cases gets himself superseded by him.

While his gigantic labours were in progress, De Foe

seems to have lived almost wholly at his favourite Newington. His writings had been profitable. He got little for *Robinson Crusoe*, but was paid largely for its successors. We have occasional glimpses of him still engaged in mercantile speculation; purchasing and assigning leases; disposing of South Sea stock; and otherwise attending to worldly affairs. But we do not see him steadily till 1724. A gentleman named Baker, afterwards known as a somewhat celebrated philosophical inquirer, had then occasion to go to Newington, where he fell in love with a pretty girl, the youngest of three daughters who lived in a large and handsome house in Church-street, which their father had newly-built.[1] The

[1] This fact may be doubtful, though De Foe does not appear to have occupied the house in question till shortly before the time mentioned. It is still standing. It is the one which was occupied by the late Mr. William Frend, of the Rock life-office, and which his widow continued to occupy. It is on the south side of Church-street, a little to the east of Lordship-lane or road, and has about four acres of ground attached, bounded on the west by a narrow foot way, once (if not still) called Cut-throat-lane. Or it may be identified thus: take the map of Stoke Newington in Robinson's history of that place, London 1820, 8vo, and look directly below the first "e" in Church-street. Among the papers by which the house is held, is the copy of the enrolment of a surrender to the lord of the manor dated February 26, 1740, in which the house is described as "hereto-"fore in the tenure or occupation of "Daniel Defoe." The history just mentioned states that he was living at Newington in 1709; but there appears to be no satisfactory reason for affirming that he built the house. Dr. Price lived for some years in it, as the domestic chaplain of a subsequent owner. These facts I derive from that very useful and well-conducted little work *Notes and Queries*, iv. 299-300. A whimsical proof was given, not long ago, of the interest with which the name of De Foe still surrounds this unpicturesque house in an unpoetical locality. Whimsical I call it, but it is also very honourable to the pilgrims from over distant seas who figure in it, and who display such enthusiasm for the memory of the great writer and popular advocate, in whom they have a common property with ourselves. The anecdote was originally told me by my old friend, Sir James Emerson Tennent, who kindly re-tells it here at my request. "The incident of "which you remind me, in connexion "with the memory of De Foe, was "this. A friend of mine lately told "me that the gentleman residing in "De Foe's house at Newington, about "two years back, was one forenoon "surprised by a visit from a party of "Americans, who drove to his door "in a hired carriage. They drew up "in front, knocked, and requested "to see the proprietor. On making "his appearance, the spokesman said "he presumed they were right in "supposing that this was the house "of Daniel De Foe?—And being "assured of the fact, he went on to "say that he and his companions "from the new country, had waited "on him as the occupant of that "mansion, impelled by their respect

love-making, on the gentleman's side at least, appears to have been gone about in a highly philosophical way; and from time to time the marriage was deferred, until the father had signed a bond to Mr. Baker for due payment of Sophia's dowry. The father was an old gentleman of sixty-four years, afflicted with gout and stone, but very cheerful, still very active, with mental faculties in sharp abundance, keeping a handsome coach, paying away much money in acts of charity, and greatly given to the cultivation of a large and pleasant garden. This was Daniel De Foe. Homely but hearty are the words in which a certain honest old Thomas Webb, after telling us what he had suffered by the death of his wife, goes on to tell us who it was that comforted and consoled him. "And "poor distressed I, left alone, and no one to go and speak "to, save only Mr. Deffoe, who hath acted a noble and "generous part towards me and my poor children. "The Lord reward him and his with the blessings of "upper and nether spring, with the blessings of his "basket and store," &c.

Alas! the basket and store of De Foe were not much oftener to be replenished on this side the grave. Five years pass, and the next glimpse we get of him reveals a sad change. It is a letter to his printer, Mr. J. Watts, in Wild-court, and even in its signature the bold upright hand is broken down. He is grieved to have detained the proofs, but he has been exceeding ill. He has revised his manuscript again, and contracted it very much, and he hopes to bring it within the bulk the printer desires. He now sends him back the first sheet, with as much copy as will make near three sheets more; and he

"for the name of his illustrious pre-
"decessor in it, to beg that they
"might be permitted to spend a
"little time in the dwelling-place of
"so eminent a man. Assent was
"readily given; whereupon they
"said that already they had ven-
"tured to anticipate that, by bringing
"a pic-nic hamper in their carriage—
"and their satisfaction was complete
"on permission being granted to
"carry it into the garden, where the
"explosion of cork, and other cor-
"responding symptoms, speedily gave
"evidence of the sincerity with which
"they had made this very matter-of-
"fact pilgrimage to the home of the
"great novelist and patriot."

shall have all the remainder, so as not to let him stand still at all. He greatly regrets the number of alterations made in the pages he returns, and fears the corrections will cost as much as perhaps setting the whole over again would be; but he will endeavour to send the rest of the copy so well corrected as to give very little trouble. —Whether or not he succeeded in that endeavour, cannot now be told; for there is no evidence that any more than that single sheet was ever printed.[1] It must be enough for us that such was his hope and his intention, and that even such, to the very last, according to this most characteristic letter, were the labours, the anxieties, and the ill-rewarded toil, which followed this great English author up to the very verge of the grave.

There is but one more letter of his preserved. Its date is a year later; and from this letter, addressed to his son-in-law Baker,[2] which is one of the most affecting that the English language contains, we learn that far beyond

[1] The original manuscript nevertheless exists, and is in the possession of Mr. Dawson Turner of Great Yarmouth. Its title is *The Complete Gentleman.*

[2] The eldest son of this marriage, David Erskine Baker, so named after his godfather Lord Buchan, wrote the *Biographia Dramatica,* or Companion to the Playhouse. What follows I transcribe from a note in the second edition of my *Life of Goldsmith.* "Pleading the case of au-"thors, and their title to a longer "protection of their copyright, Mr. "Serjeant Talfourd employed this "affecting illustration. 'A man of "'genius and integrity, who has "'received all insult and injury "'from his contemporaries, obtains "'nothing from posterity but a "'name. Look at Daniel De Foe; "'recollect him pilloried, bankrupt, "'wearing away his life to pay his "'creditors in full, and dying in the "'struggle!—and his works live, "'imitated, corrupted, yet casting "'off their stains, not by protection "'of law, but by their own pure "'essence. Had every schoolboy, "'whose young imagination has been "'prompted by his great work, and "'whose heart has learned to throb "'in the strange yet familiar solitude "'he created, given even the half-"'penny of the statute of Anne, "'there would have been no want of a "'provision for his children, no need "'of a subscription for a statue to "'his memory!' As I transcribe "these eloquent words (January, "1854), I become acquainted with "the most striking practical comment "which it would be possible for them "to receive, in the fact that there "is now living in Kennington, in "deep though uncomplaining poverty, "James De Foe, aged 77, the great "grandson of the author of Robinson "Crusoe."—*Life and Times of Goldsmith,* vol. ii. p. 482.

The sequel to this note remains (March, 1858) to be given. Upon reading it, Mr. Landor addressed to the *Times* a noble eulogy on De Foe, calling upon every schoolboy, and

poverty, or printers, or booksellers, or any of the manifold ills of authorship, the conduct of De Foe's second son was embittering the closing hours of his long and checkered life. He had violated some large trust reposed in him by his father, and had reduced his mother and sisters to beggary. "Nothing but this has conquered or could

every man in England who had been one, to give his penny at once to save the descendant he had left—"a "Crusoe without a Friday, in an "island to him a desert." I subjoin the close of this striking appeal.

"Let our novelists, now the glory "of our literature, remember their "elder brother Daniel, and calculate "(if, indeed, the debt is calculable) "what they owe him.

"Let our historians ask themselves "if no tribute is due, in long arrear, "to the representative of him who "wrote the *History of the Plague in* "*London*. What ought to live will "live, what ought to perish will "perish. Marble is but a wretched "prop at best. Defoe wants no "statue, and is far beyond all other "want. Alas! there is one behind "who is not so. Let all contribute "one penny for one year; poor James "has lived seventy-seven, and his "dim eyes can not look far into "another.

"Persuade, Sir, for you can more "powerfully than any, the rich, the "industrious, the studious, to pur"chase a large store of perdurable "happiness for themselves by the "smallest sum of a day's expendi"ture. The author of that book "which has imparted to most of them "the greatest delight of any, was also "the earliest teacher of political "economy, the first propounder of "free trade. He planted that tree "which, stationary and stunted for "nearly two centuries, is now spread"ing its shadow by degrees over all "the earth. He was the most far"sighted of our statesmen, and the "most worthily trusted by the wisest "of our kings. He stood up for the "liberty of the press; let the press "be grateful.

"It was in the power of Johnson "to relieve the granddaughter of "Milton: Sir, it is in yours to prop "up the last scion of Defoe. If "Milton wrote the grandest poem, "and the most energetic and eloquent "prose, of any writer in any country; "if he stood erect before Tyranny, "and covered with his buckler, not "England only, but nascent nations; "if our great prophet raised in vision "the ladder that rose from earth to "heaven, with angels upon every "step of it; lower, indeed, but not "less useful, were the energies of "Defoe. He stimulated to enterprise "those colonies of England which "extend over every sea, and which "carry with them, from him, the "spirit and the language that will "predominate throughout the world. "Achilles and Homer will be for"gotten before Crusoe and Defoe."

To this most striking letter succeeded one by Mr. Charles Knight, from whom the information as to James De Foe originally reached me, and who had already, with his characteristic zeal in every good work, opened in conjunction with Mr. Dickens a subscription. Mr. Landor's letter brought immediate and large additions to it, and enough was obtained for the purpose desired. From the close of January 1854, to the middle of May 1857, nearly 200*l* was paid, in small sums, to the worthy old man; whose needs were in this way better satisfied than if the money in any larger amount had been placed at his disposal. Much more might have been collected, but more was not wanted. James De Foe died on the 19th of May 1857. After

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" conquer me. *Et tu ! Brute.* I depended upon him, I " trusted him, I gave up my two dear unprovided children " into his hands; but he has no compassion, and suffers " them and their poor dying mother to beg their bread " at his door, and to crave, as if it were an alms, what he " is bound under hand and seal, besides the most sacred " promises, to supply them with; himself, at the same " time, living in a profusion of plenty. It is too much " for me. Excuse my infirmity; I can say no more, my " heart is too full. I only ask one thing of you as a " dying request. Stand by them when I am gone, and " let them not be wronged, while he is able to do them " right. Stand by them as a brother; and if you have " any thing within you owing to my memory, who have " bestow'd on you the best gift I had to give, let them not " be injured and trampled on by false pretences, and " unnatural reflections. I hope they will want no help " but that of comfort and council; but that, they will " indeed want, being too easy to be managed by words and " promises." Even thus De Foe writes, from a place near Greenwich, where he seems to have been some time wandering about, alone, in want, and with a broken heart. The letter, as we have said, is to his son-in-law, Baker; possessor of his "best gift," his dear daughter; and it closes thus: "I would say, I hope with comfort, that it " is yet well I am so near my journey's end, and am " hastening to the place where the weary are at rest, and " where the wicked cease to trouble; be it that the " passage is rough, and the day stormy. By what way " soever He please to bring me to the end of it, I desire " to finish life with this temper of soul in all cases— " *Te Deum laudamus.* May all you do be prosperous, and " all you meet with pleasant, and may you both escape " the tortures and troubles of uneasy life! It adds to

payment of all expenses incident to his illness and death, a very small balance was handed to his daughters; and an account of the monies collected and distributed was then circulated among the subscribers, in so far as it was possible to reach them, by Mr. Knight and myself.

" my grief that I must never see the pledge of your " mutual love, my little grandson. Give him my blessing, " and may he be, to you both, your joy in youth, and your " comfort in age, and never add a sigh to your sorrow. " Kiss my dear Sophy once more for me; and, if I must " see her no more, tell her this is from a father that loved " her above all his comforts, to his last breath."

The money was recovered, and the family again prosperous; but Daniel De Foe was gone. In his seventy-first year, on the 24th of April 1731, he had somehow found his way back to LONDON—to die in that parish of St. Giles's, Cripplegate,[1] wherein he was born; and, as long as the famous old city should live, to live in the memory and admiration of her citizens.

[1] The precise place of De Foe's death was not known to Mr. Walter Wilson. It took place in Ropemakers'-alley, Moorfields. Of this fact there can be no reasonable doubt, it being so stated in the *Daily Courant* of the day following his death. Ropemakers'-alley no longer exists, but it stood about opposite to where the London Institution now stands.

SIR RICHARD STEELE.[1]

1675—1729.

On the Life and Writings of Addison. By THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY London, 1852.

STEELE and Addison are among the first ghosts met by Fielding in his delightful *Journey from this World to the next.* A remark from the spirit of Virgil having a little disconcerted the bashful Joseph, he has turned for re-assurance to the spirit most familiar and best known to him on earth, when at once Steele heartily embraces him, and tells him he had been the greatest man up in the other world, and that he readily resigned all the merit of his own works to him. In return, Addison gives him a gracious smile, and, clapping him on the back with much solemnity, cries out, "Well said, Dick." Fielding was here laughing at the claim set up by Addison's associates, when they would have struck down his old fellow labourer's fame, to add to the glories of his own. What Steele said so well for his friend, and ill for himself, in the other world, had already been more than broadly hinted in this, in Mr. Tickell's celebrated preface.

Nevertheless, Steele's fame survived that back-handed blow. What the living Addison himself foretold came true; and, out of party contentions so fierce that no character escaped them unsullied, side by side, when

[1] From the *Quarterly Review*, March 1855. With additions.

those contentions ceased, his friend's and his emerged. Though circumstances favoured somewhat the one against the other, there had come to be a corner for both in almost all men's liking; and those "little diurnal essays "which are extant still," kept also extant, in an equal and famous companionship, the two foremost Essayists of England. A more powerful hand than Mr. Tickell's now strikes them rudely apart. A magnificent eulogy of Addison is here built upon a most contemptuous depreciation of Steele; and if we are content to accept without appeal the judgment of Mr. Macaulay's Essay, there is one pleasant face the less in our Walhalla of British Worthies.

For ourselves we must frankly say Not Content, and our reasons shall be stated in this article. Not, we dare say, without partiality; certainly not without frank and full allowance for the portion of evil which is inseparable from all that is good, and for the something of littleness mixed up with all that is great. In one of his most charming essays Steele has himself reminded us, that the word *imperfection* should never carry to the considerate man's heart a thought unkinder than the word *humanity;*[2] and we shall also think it well to remember, what with not less wisdom on another occasion he remarked, as to the prodigious difference between the figure the same person bears in our imagination when we are pleased with him, from that wherein we behold him when we are angry.[3]

[1] "Their personal friendship and "enmities must cease, and the parties "they are engaged in be at an end, "before their faults or their virtues "can have justice done them. . . I "cannot forbear entertaining my- "self very often with the idea of "an imaginary historian describing "the reign of Anne I, and intro- "ducing it with a preface to his "readers that he is now entering "upon the most shining part of the "English story. The several anta- "gonists who now endeavour to de- "preciate one another, and are "celebrated or traduced by different "parties, will then have the same "body of admirers, and appear "illustrious in the opinions of the "whole British nation. . . . 'It "'was under this reign,' he will "say, 'that the Spectator published "'those little diurnal Essays, which "'are still extant,' &c. &c."—*Spectator*, No. 101.

[2] *Tatler*, No. 246.

[3] *The Theatre*, No. 26.

Steele we think eminently a man to write or speak of in the mood of pleasure.

But first let Mr. Macaulay speak of him. Introducing him as a person only entitled to distinction as one of the chief members of the small literary coterie to which Addison was the oracle, and deriving from that fact his claim to present recognition, he describes him in general terms as one of those people whom it is impossible either to hate or to respect. He admits his temper to have been sweet, his affections warm, and his spirits lively; but says that his passions were so strong, and his principles so weak, that his life was spent in sinning and repenting, in inculcating what was right and doing what was wrong. Hence, we are told, though he was a man of piety and honour in speculation, he was in practice much of the rake and a little of the swindler; but then again he was so good-natured, that it was not easy to be seriously angry with him; and even rigid moralists felt more inclined to pity than to blame him, when he diced himself into a spunging-house, or drank himself into a fever. Among the rigid moralists here referred to we must presume was Mr. Joseph Addison, whose strict abstinence from drink is so well known; but the Essayist is careful to add that the kindness with which that rigid moralist regarded his friend was "*not unmingled with scorn.*"

So much the worse for Addison, if that be true; for very certainly he succeeded in concealing it from his friend, and, we imagine indeed, from every one but Mr. Macaulay. True, no doubt, it is, that so consummate a master of humour could hardly have it always under control; and that the most intimate of his associates would not be spared the pleasant laugh which was raised in turn against all. But Pope, from whom we derive the fact that he would now and then "play a little" on the extraordinary regard which Steele evinced for him, also informs us how well it was always taken; and that anything of contempt ever passed from one to the other, is most assuredly not to be inferred from any published

record. The first characteristic thing which Pope noted in Addison, that he was always for moderation in parties, and used to blame his dear friend Steele for being too much of a party-man, marks the source of whatever disagreement they had; and he who, on that very ground of party, lavished upon Steele the most unsparing and unscrupulous abuse, and whose old intimacy with both friends had opened to him the secrets of their most familiar hours, never thought of using against him such a formidable weapon as he would have found in Addison's contempt.

Swift calls Steele a thoughtless fellow, satirises his submission to his wife, and says he was never good company till he had got a bottle of wine in his head;[1] he twits him with his debts, and flings a bailiff at him in every other paragraph through some scores of pages;[2] he avers that he cannot write grammar;[3] nay, he descends so low (but this through the fouler mouth of one of the professional libellers of the day) as even coarsely to laugh at his short face, little flat nose, broad back, and thick legs;[4] and yet he empties ineffectively all those vials of his own scorn without one allusion to that other which he knew would have gone, with a deadly venom, straight to the heart of his victim. Before their final rupture, he had to answer Steele's reproach that he had spoken of him as "bridled by Addison," and he does this with a denial that frankly admits Steele's right to be jealous of the imputation.[5] Throughout his intimate speech to Stella, whether his humour be sarcastic or polite, the friendship of Steele and Addison is for ever suggesting some annoyance to himself, some mortification, some regret; but never once the doubt that it was not intimate and sincere, or that into it entered anything inconsistent with a perfect equality. When he wishes to serve the one,

[1] *Journal to Stella*, Oct. 3, 1710.
[2] *Importance of the Guardian considered.*
[3] *Public Spirit of the Whigs.*
[4] *Letter from Dr. Tripe to Nestor Ironside.*
[5] Letter of Swift to Steele, May 27, 1713.

and is annoyed that the other receives the overture coldly (22nd October, 1710); when he suspects the one of preventing the other's visit to Harley (15th November, 1710); when he treats a service to the one as not less a service to the other (14th January, 1710-11); when he reproaches the one as ungrateful for what he had done for the other (15th January, 1710-11); when he calls himself a fool for spending his credit in favour of both (16th March, 1710-11); and when he has promised my Lord Treasurer never again to speak for either (29th June, 1711); he shows you, still, that he is speaking of an intercourse upheld by the strongest attachments, and into which, whatever the respective merits of the men, there could have entered no element of "*scorn*."

It is quite true, however, that some coldness and estrangement did grow between Steele and Addison as time went on, though to the last it was never so complete as Mr. Macaulay would wish to convey. To this, and its causes, we shall have to advert hereafter; but in connection with it we have so express and affecting a statement from Steele himself, only six months after his friend's death, and in reply to a coarse assailant whom it silenced, that as to the general fact it leaves no doubt whatever. There never, he says, was a more strict friendship than between himself and Addison, nor had they ever any difference but what proceeded from their different way of pursuing the same thing; the one waited and stemmed the torrent, while the other too often plunged into it; but though they thus had lived for some years last past, shunning each other, they still preserved the most passionate concern for their mutual welfare; and when they met, "they were as unreserved as boys, "and talked of the greatest affairs, upon which they saw "where they differed, without pressing (what they knew "impossible) to convert each other."[1] As to the substance or worth of what thus divided them, Steele only adds the significant expression of his hope that, if his

[1] *The Theatre*, No. xii. Feb. 9, 1719-20.

family is the worse, his country may be the better, for the mortification *he* has undergone.

There is something in that. When a man is indiscreet, it is not beside the matter to inquire what passion it is that urges him to indiscretion. It may be the actual good of others, or it may be a fancied good for himself. Mr. Allworthy did so many kindnesses for so many people, that he made enemies of the whole parish; and it will perhaps generally be found that the man who cares least for his neighbours, is very far from the least likely to pass for good-natured among them. It will not do to judge off-hand, even between the impetuosity which plunges into the torrent, and the placidity which waits upon the brink. Each temperament has its advantages, within a narrow or a more extended range; and where the passion for public affairs has been so incorrigible that it refused to take regard of its own or others' convenience in its manifestations, we must not too hastily resolve to take part either against the hostility it provokes, or with the sympathy it repels. So much, before passing in review Steele's actual character and story, it will be well to keep in mind; though there can be no manner of doubt that his course, whether in other respects ill or well taken, put him at grave disadvantage with the world.

Even in regard to this, however, there is no need to take any special tone of pity; and too much stress has perhaps been laid on Addison's own regrets in the matter. It was when the good Mr. Hughes thought he saw an opportunity, on the sudden cessation of Mr. Steele's *Guardian*, to get Mr. Addison's services for a little scheme of his own; and, with many flourishes about the regret with which all the more moderate Whigs saw their common friend's thoughts turned entirely on politics and disengaged from pursuits more entertaining and profitable, had propounded his plan for a *Register;* that Mr. Addison, foreseeing little glory in working with Mr. Hughes, and sending a civil *No, I thank you, I must now rest and lay in a little fuel*, proceeded, merely upon the hint his cor-

respondent had thrown out, to speak of Steele in language often quoted, and used against him by Mr. Macaulay. "In the mean time I should be glad if you would set "such a project on foot, for I know nobody else capable "of succeeding in it, and turning it to the good of man-"kind, since my friend has laid it down. I am in a "thousand troubles for poor Dick, and wish that his zeal "for the public may not be ruinous to himself; but he has "sent me word that he is determined to go on, and that "any advice I can give him in this particular will have "no weight with him." Formerly, as now, these expressions have been pointed to a sense not exactly intended by them. Taken with what induced them, and read as they were written, they are certainly unmingled with *scorn*.

There is pity in them, to be sure; and there is what Mr. Macaulay calls the "trying with little success to keep "him out of scrapes;" both which must pass for what they are worth. There is also the "poor Dick," which has been so lavishly repeated since; but we must take the liberty to add, with a feeling and for a purpose far less worthy. It is our belief that no man so much as Steele has suffered from *compassion*. It was out of his own bitter experience he shrewdly called it, himself, the best disguise of malice, and said that the most apposite course to cry a man down was to lament him.[1] Mr. Macaulay is incapable of malice, even if the motive for it were in such

[1] The sketch in which this occurs (No. 4) is of a class of men who (making allowance for special differences in themselves) would not be ill represented by De Foe and Steele. It is very difficult, he says, with an obvious tone of self-reference, to put them down. It is thought enough to shrug your shoulders, take snuff, and say something in pity of them. But yet the man you so lament is after all too hardy a creature to be so discountenanced and undone. "He "is never mortified but when "truth, honour, and reason are "against him; which as soon as he "perceives, he, without ceremony, or "taking leave, runs to the side on "which they appear. Hence it is, "that he passes all his days under re-"proach from some persons or other; "and he is, at different times, called a "renegade, a confessor, and a martyr, "by every party. This happens from "his sticking to principles, and "having no respect to persons; and "it is his inward constancy that "makes him vary in outward appear-"ance. It is therefore unlucky for "those who speak of this kind of cha-"racter with ridicule, that all the "great who ever lived were such."

a case conceivable; but whatever praise he gives to Steele is always in the way of condescension, and he cannot bring himself to state a virtue in him which he does not at the same time extenuate with its equal vice or drawback. We much fear there are few characters that would stand this kind of analysis,—very few in which the levelling circumstance might not be detected, that more or less brings down the high, the wise, the strong, and the fortunate to the lower level with their fellow-men.

An ill mending of the matter it would be, indeed, to extenuate vice itself as a set-off to the extenuation of virtue; but both have need of a more considerate reflection than they are generally apt to receive, in connection with such a life as we shall shortly retrace. For not a few years of that life, we dare say, Captain Steele might have pleaded, with Captain Plume, that for all his exuberance of spirits he was yet very far from the rake the world imagined. "I have got an air of freedom," says Farquhar's pleasant hero, "which people mistake in me, just as in "others they mistake formality for religion." It is a kind of mistake committed in many forms; and Pope was hinting at it when he remarked that whereas, according to La Rochefoucauld, a great many virtues are disguised vices, he would engage, by the same mode of reasoning, to prove a great many vices to be disguised virtues. Take the love of ourselves for example, and say that in it lies the motive of most of our actions, good or bad; yet it by no means would follow that the number are not much greater wherein the self-love of some men incline them to please others, than where the self-love of others is employed wholly in pleasing themselves. Steele had said the same thing several years before in his *Christian Hero*, when he remarked that there can really be no greater love of self than to love others, nor any more secure way to obtain good offices than to do them.

Not that any such modes of reasoning may sufficiently excuse a life spent, if what Mr. Macaulay tell us be true, in sinning and repenting, in inculcating what was right

and doing what was wrong. A profitless life to himself, beyond a doubt, if such indeed was Steele's; but suggestive also of the remark, that, since the wrong that was done has passed away, and the right that was inculcated remains, others decidedly may have profited though he did not. For ourselves, holding with the philosophy which teaches us that depravity of disposition is less pardonable than any kind of frailty of passion, we know of no offence against virtue so grave as to speak of it in disparagement; and no worse practice in regard to vice than the systematic praise and recommendation of it. With the latter, at least, no one has ever been so reckless, in our day or even in his own, as to charge Richard Steele. He had a real love and reverence for virtue, Pope told Spence. He had the best nature in the world, and was a man of almost boundless benevolence, said Young. Lady Mary Montagu lived much with all the wits, and knew no one with the kind nature of Steele. It is his admitted weakness to have yielded to the temptation which yet he never lost the strength to condemn; but we know who has said that, if at all times to do were as easy as to teach what is good to be done, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces.[1] Let us add that even Addison himself could not always do both; and that, if the strict rule were applied universally, never to accept unreservedly what is good in a man, and praise it accordingly, without minute measuring-off of what may also be condemned for evil, with detraction at least equal to the praise, there would be altogether an end at last to all just judgments, and a woful general confusion of right and wrong. That Addison had not Steele's defects; that Steele's defects, graver though they may have been, were yet not those of Addison; should surely be far from matter of complaining with us, since in no small degree it has served to contribute to the more complete instruction and entertainment of the world. There is a wise little

[1] *Hamlet:* one of the wisest and most profound, we must surely say, of all human compositions.

paper in which Steele has pursued so closely an argument resembling this, that we may adapt it to our present use. We may stigmatise it as not less a want of sense than of good nature to say that Addison has less exuberant spirits than Steele, but Steele not such steady self-control as Addison; for that such men have not each other's capacities is no more a diminution to either, than if you should say Addison is not Steele, or Steele not Addison. The heathen world, as Mr. Bickerstaff reasons the matter, had so little notion that perfection was to be expected from men, that among them any one quality or endowment in a heroic degree made a god. Hercules had strength, but it was never objected to him that he wanted wit. Apollo presided over wit, and it was never asked whether he had strength. Those wise heathens were glad to immortalise any one serviceable gift, and to overlook all imperfections in the person who had it. But with us it is far otherwise. We are only too eager to reject many manifest virtues, if we find them accompanied with a single apparent weakness.

Nor does the shrewd Mr. Bickerstaff end the argument here. He discovers in it the secret why principally it is that the worst of mankind, the libellers, receive so much encouragement. "The low race of men take a great "pleasure in finding an eminent character levelled to "their condition by a report of its defects, and keep them-"selves in countenance, though they are excelled in a "thousand virtues, if they believe they have in common "with a great person any one fault." It would not be easy to express more perfectly than in these few words the danger of those extremes of depreciation to which Steele more than any man has been subjected. It is our firm belief that, whatever his improvidence may have been, he was incapable of a dishonourable action. It will not be difficult to show, in the brief sketch we shall presently give of his career, how little avoidable in his circumstances were not a few of his embarrassments and troubles. We wish it were possible to doubt that the life

to which only *he* was warranted in applying the modest expression that it was "at best but pardonable," was not better than ninety-nine hundredths of theirs who would be apt to pass the harshest judgments upon it. It was at least the life of a disinterested politician and patriot, of a tender husband, of an attached father, of a scholar, a wit, a man of genius, a gentleman. But the wit and the genius brought with them their usual penalties; and the world, not content that their exercise should have enlarged the circle of its enjoyments, and added enormously to human happiness in various ways, must satisfy its vulgar eagerness to find feet of clay for its image of gold, and give censorious fools the comfort of speaking as ill as may be of their benefactor.

And so the inquisition, far worse than Torquemada's, is opened. Circumstances of life the most minute, nor any longer intelligible without the context that has perished, are dragged into monstrous prominence. Relations the most intimate are rudely exposed. Letters are printed without concealment, though written in the confidence of a privacy so sacred that to break it in the case of ordinary men would be to overturn society altogether. And if the result should finally show that the man who has taught us all so well what our own conduct ought to be, had unhappily failed in such wisdom for the guidance of his own, the general complacence and satisfaction are complete. Silly world! as even Swift can find it in his heart to say; not to understand how much better occupied it would be in finding out that men of wit may be the most, rather than the least, moral of mankind. Unlucky man of wit, who, in the teeth of his own earnest warning, that only he who lives below his income lays up efficient armour against those who will cover all his frailties when he is so fortified, and exaggerate them when he is naked and defenceless,[1] goes incontinently and lives above his own income, and gets himself rated as "a "swindler."

[1] *The Tatler*, No. 180.

Nor does Mr. Macaulay's disparagement of Steele take only the form of such harsh and quite unwarrantable expressions. It extends from his moral to his intellectual character; and we are not permitted to believe that a man could write excellent Tatlers who was not able to pay his tavern-bills with unvarying punctuality.

In forming his most celebrated literary project, we are told, Steele was far indeed from seeing its consequences. It had originated in his access to early and authentic foreign news opened by that appointment of Gazetteer, which, says Mr. Macaulay, he had received "from Sunderland, at "the request, it is said, of Addison." This is another of the many attempts which we grieve to see in his Essay to exhibit Steele as wholly dependent on Addison for his position with public men; but it is certainly incorrect. Swift expressly tells us, on the information of Under-secretary Erasmus Lewis, that it was Harley from whom he received his appointment, and at the request of Maynwaring. Indeed, Steele has himself left us in no doubt as to this; for when he was reproached for attacking the man to whom his thanks for it were due, he excused himself by saying that Harley, the person referred to, had refused at the time to accept such thanks, and had transferred them wholly to Maynwaring; that very leader among the Whigs who is now known himself to have written the attack complained of.[1]

Mr. Macaulay proceeds to give us his own description of the aim and design of the *Tatler*. Suggested by Steele's experience as Gazetteer, it was to be on a plan quite new, and to appear on the days when the post left London

[1] See the *Tatler*, No. 193. The fictitious letter of prompter Downes was certainly by Maynwaring. I quote Swift: "Steele has lost his "place as Gazetteer," he writes to Stella (*Journal*, Oct. 22, 1710), "three hundred pounds a-year, for "writing a *Tatler* some months ago "against Mr. Harley, who gave it "him at first, and raised the salary "from sixty to three hundred "pounds. This was devilish un-"grateful." "When," he says, in the *Importance of the Guardian considered*, (Works, ed. Scott, iv. 192-3), "Mr. Maynwaring recom-"mended him to the employment of "Gazetteer, Mr. Harley, out of an "inclination to encourage men of "parts, raised that office from fifty "pounds to three hundred pounds a-"year."

for the country, which were, in that generation, the Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Mr. Macaulay thinks it immaterial to mention that De Foe's *Review*, with not a few points of resemblance, had already for five years travelled by the country posts on those days; but indeed the resemblance could hardly be expected to suggest itself, with such a low opinion of Steele's purpose in the *Tatler* as he seems to have formed. It was to contain, he says, the foreign news, accounts of theatrical representations, and the literary gossip of Will's and of the Grecian. It was also to contain remarks on the fashionable topics of the day, compliments to beauties, pasquinades on noted sharpers, and criticisms on popular preachers. "The aim of Steele does not appear to have "been at first higher than this." Mr. Macaulay's manifest object is to convey the impression that the *Tatler* had no real worth until Addison joined it.

Now the facts are, that, with the exception of very rare occasional hints embodied in papers indubitably by Steele, and of the greater part of one essay which appeared in May, and of another published in July, Addison's contributions to the *Tatler* did not begin until his return from Ireland in the middle of October, 1709, when eighty numbers had been issued. If, therefore, what Mr. Macaulay would convey be correct, Steele's narrow and limited design must have lasted at least so long; and that which gives the moral not less than the intellectual charm to these famous Essays, which turned their humour into a censorship of manners at once gentle and effective, and made their wit subservient to wisdom and piety, could not have become apparent till after the middle of the second volume. Up to that time, according to Mr. Macaulay, Steele must have been merely compiling news, reviewing theatres, retailing literary gossip, remarking on fashionable topics, complimenting beauties, pasquinading sharpers, or criticising preachers; and could not yet have entered the higher field which the genius of Addison was to open to him. Nevertheless this is certain, that in

dedicating the first volume of the work to Maynwaring he describes in language that admits of no misconstruction, not only his own intention in setting it on foot, but what he calls "the sudden acceptance," the extraordinary success, which immediately followed, and which attracted to its subscription almost every name "now "eminent among us for power, wit, beauty, valour, or "wisdom." His wish being, he says, to observe upon the manners, both in the pleasurable and the busy part of mankind, with a view to an exposure of the false arts of life, he resolved to do this by way of a letter of intelligence constructed on so novel a plan that it should appeal to the curiosity of all persons, of all conditions and of each sex; and he proceeds at once to explain the character of his design as precisely that attempt "to pull "off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and "to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our "discourse, and our behaviour," which was remarked by Johnson, three-quarters of a century afterwards, as its most happy distinguishing feature. It was this that the old critic and philosopher singled out as the very drift of all its labour in teaching us the minuter decencies and inferior duties, in regulating the practice of our daily conversation, in correcting depravities rather ridiculous than criminal, and in removing, if not the lasting calamities of life, those grievances which are its hourly vexation.

But the papers themselves are before us, if we want evidence more conclusive. Here is the first number with its motto superscribed, claiming for its comprehensive theme the *quicquid agunt homines;* and here, among the very first words that give us hearty greeting—"and for as "much as this globe is not trodden upon by mere drudges "of business only, but that men of spirit and genius are "justly to be esteemed as considerable agents in it"—the lively note seems struck for every pleasant strain that followed. Where are the commonplaces described by Mr. Macaulay? How shall we limit our selection of examples in disproof of the alleged restriction to compiling, gossip-

ing, complimenting, pasquinading? Why, as we turn over the papers preceding that number 81 which must be said to have begun the regular contributions of Addison, there is hardly a trait that does not flash upon us of the bright wit, the cordial humour, the sly satire, the subtle yet kindly criticism, the good-nature and humanity, which have endeared this delightful book to successive generations of readers. There is, indeed, not less prominent at the outset than it continued to the close, the love of theatrical representations, and no doubt actors are criticised and preachers too; but we require no better proof than the very way in which this is done, of the new and original spirit that entered with it into periodical literature. In both the critic finds means of detecting countless affectations; and no one acquainted with the Pulpit of that day, need feel surprise at the hints he gives of the service the Stage might render it, or that Mr. Betterton should have borrowed from Mr. Bickerstaff the answer to Sancroft's question—why it was that actors, speaking of things imaginary, affected audiences as if they were real; while preachers, speaking of things real, could only affect their congregations as with things imaginary.? "Why "indeed I don't know; unless it is that we actors speak "of things imaginary as if they were real, while you in "the pulpit speak of things real as if they were imagi-"nary." An admirable paper to the same effect among the early Tatlers is that wherein he tells us, that in tragical representations of the highest kind it is not the pomp of language, or the magnificence of dress, in which the passion is wrought that touches sensible spirits, "but "something of a plain and simple nature which breaks in "upon our souls by that sympathy which is given us for "our mutual good will and service."[1] And he illustrates his position by the example of Macduff when he hears of the murder of his children, and of Brutus when he speaks of the death of Portia.

[1] *Tatler*, No. 68.

There is no criticism of Shakespeare in that day at all comparable to this of Steele's, at the outset and to the close of the *Tatler*. With no set analysis or fine-spun theory, but dropped only here and there, and from time to time, with a careless grace, it is yet of the subtlest discrimination. He places the great dramatist as high in philosophy as in poetry, and in the ethics of human life and passion quotes ever his authority as supreme. None but Steele then thought of criticising him in that strain. The examples just quoted, for instance, are used as lessons in art, but also as experiences for patience under actual sorrow; and he finely adds, that it is in life itself exactly as at one of his plays, where we see the man overwhelmed by grief yet struggling to bear it with decency and patience, we "sigh *for* him and give him every groan he suppresses." In another Tatler (No. 47) he separates the author of *Othello* from the ordinary tragic poets, from the gentlemen, as he calls them, "who write in the buskin style" (and they were legion then, beginning with his friend Mr. Rowe, and ending, though he refused to see *that*, with his friend Mr. Addison), by the excellent distinction that it always seems as if Shakespeare were suffering the events represented, while the rest were merely looking on. In short, he says, there is no medium in these attempts, and you must go to the very bottom of the heart, or it is all mere language. His advice to his tragic friends therefore is, that they should read Shakespeare with care, and they will soon be deterred from putting forth what they persuade themselves to call tragedy. They are to read him, and to understand the distinction between pretending to be a thing, and being the thing they pretend. They are to read particularly, and mark the differences between the two—the speech which old Northumberland addresses to the Messenger before, and that which he utters after, he knows of the death of Hotspur, his son; the last, one of the noblest passages in the whole of Shakespeare.[1] And

[1] Colley Cibber soon afterwards did what he could to vulgarise that speech of Northumberland's, by wrenching it out of its place, to fit it

he warns them that "he who pretends to be sorrowful and "is not, is a wretch yet more contemptible than he who "pretends to be merry and is not."

In this mode of eliciting, not merely canons of taste, but moral truths and rules of conduct, from the plays he sees acted, or the books he has been reading, Steele enriched his earliest and his latest Tatlers with a style of criticism which he must be said to have created. Nor is he satisfied with less than the highest models; delighting not more to place the philosophy above the poetry of Shakespeare, than to discover the sweetness and grace which underlie the majesty of Milton. The sixth Tatler begins the expression of his reverence for the latter poet, and not until the last line of the last Tatler, on which Shakespeare's name is imprinted, does it cease in regard to either. It was he, and not his friend, who, in that age of little faith, first raised again the poet of Paradise; his allusions to him, from the very commencement, are incessant; and a Tatler of but a few days earlier than that just quoted contains not only the noble lines in which Adam contemplates the sleeping Eve, but, by way of comment on its picture of manly affection made up of respect and tenderness, throws out this delightful remark. "This is "that sort of passion which truly deserves the name of "love, and has something more generous than friendship "itself; for it has a constant care of the object beloved,

into his stage translation of *Richard III.* But what an astonishing grandeur of passion there is in it!—

"Now bind my brows with iron—and approach
"The rugged'st hour that time and spite dare bring
"To frown upon the enrag'd Northumberland.
"Let heav'n kiss earth! Now let not Nature's hand
"Keep this wild flood confin'd! let Order die!
"And let this world no longer be a stage,
"To feed contention in a lingering act;
"But let one spirit of the first-born Cain
"Reign in all bosoms; that, each heart being set
"On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,
"And Darkness be the burier of the dead!"

If the whole of poetry, ancient and modern, there is no image greater than that.

" abstracted from its own interests in the possession " of it."

At a time in no way remarkable for refinement, Steele's gallantry to women, thus incessantly expressed in *The Tatler* to the last, was that of a Sir Tristan or Sir Calidore; and in not a small degree, to every household into which it carried such unaccustomed language, this was a ground of its extraordinary success. Inseparable always from his passion is the exalted admiration he feels; and his love is the very flower of his respect. Delightfully does he say of a woman in the 206th Tatler, that the love of her is not to be put apart from some esteem of her; and as she is naturally the object of affection, she who has your esteem has also some degree of your love. But as, unhappily, a woman's education was then sunk to the lowest ebb, there is also no subject to which he has occasion so often and so eagerly to return, as a comparison of the large amount of care bestowed on her person with the little given to her mind. You deliver your daughter to a dancing-master, he says in one of these papers, you put a collar round her neck, you teach her every movement under pain of never having a husband if she steps, or looks, or moves awry; and all the time you forget the true art, which " is to make mind and body improve together, to " make gesture follow thought, and not let thought be " employed upon gesture." As he says in another paper to the like effect, a woman must think well to look well.[1] He is never weary of surrounding her form with hosts of graces and delights; in her mind, how unused and uncultivated soever, he yet recognises always a finer and more delicate humanity; and of all the subtle and eloquent things ever uttered in her praise by poet or romancer, none have surpassed that fascinating eulogy of Lady Elizabeth Hastings which is contained in the 49th Tatler. " That awful distance which we bear toward her in all " our thoughts of her, and that cheerful familiarity with

[1] No. 212; and see No. 248.

" which we approach her, are certain instances of her " being the truest object of love of any of her sex. In " this accomplished lady, love is the constant effect, be- " cause it is never the design. Yet, though her mien " carries much more invitation than command, to behold " her is an immediate check to loose behaviour, and *to* " *love her is a liberal education.*"

As we have turned to this charming passage, we meet another of his illustrations from Shakespeare, in which, rebuking the author of a new tragedy for relying too much on the retinue, guards, ushers, and courtiers of his hero to make him magnificent, "Shakespeare," he exclaims, " is our pattern. In the tragedy of Cæsar he introduces " his hero in his night-gown." The resemblance of Addison's 42nd Spectator to this 53rd Tatler need not be pointed out; and we shall be excused for saying, with all our love and respect for Addison, that he might with good effect have taken, now and then, even a hint of conduct, as well as one of criticism, from his friend. As to modes of dying, for example. The 11th Tatler, with a truth and spirit not to be surpassed, remarks that any doctrine on the subject of dying, other than that of living well, is the most insignificant and most empty of all the labours of men. A tragedian can die by rule, and wait till he discovers a plot, or says a fine thing upon his exit; but in real life, and by noble spirits, it will be done decently, without the ostentation of it. Commend me, exclaims Steele, to that natural greatness of soul expressed by an innocent and consequently resolute country fellow, who said, in the pains of the cholic, " If I once get this breath out of my " body, you shall hang me before you put it in again." Honest Ned! And so he died.

And what hints of other characters, taken from the same portion of the *Tatler*, need we, or shall we, add to honest Ned's, in proof that Steele did not wait for Addison's help before stamping his design with the most marked feature that remained with it? The difficulty is selection. Shall we take the wealthy wags who give one

another credit in discourse according to their purses, who jest by the pound, and make answers as they honour bills; and who, with unmoved muscles for the most exquisite wit whose banker's balance they are not acquainted with, smirk at every word each speaks to the other?[1] Shall we take the modest young bachelor of arts, who, thinking himself fit for anything he can get, is above nothing that is offered, and, having come to town recommended to a chaplain's place but finding none vacant, modestly accepts that of a postilion?[2] Shall we introduce the eminent storyteller and politician, who owes the regularity and fluency of his dullness entirely to his snuff-box?[3] Shall we make acquaintance with the whimsical young gentleman, so ambitious to be thought worse than he is, that in his degree of understanding he sets up for a free-thinker, and talks atheistically in coffee-houses all day, though every morning and evening, it can be proved upon him, he regularly at home says his prayers?[4] Shall the well-meaning Umbra take us by the button, and talk half an hour to us upon matters wholly insignificant with an air of the utmost solemnity, that we may teach ourselves the charity of not being offended with what has a good intention in it, by remembering that to little men little things are of weight, and that, though our courteous friend never served us, he is ever willing to do it, and believes he really does do it?[5] Or, while Mr. Bickerstaff thus teaches us that impotent kindness is to be tolerated, shall Mrs. Jenny Distaff show us that impotent malice is not, and that society should scout the fool who cannot listen to praise without whispering detraction, or hear a man of worth named without recounting the worst passage of his life.[6]

Shall we follow into Garraway's or the Stock Exchange those two men, in whom so striking a contrast appears of plain simplicity with imposing affectation, and learn that

[1] *Tatler*, No. 57.
[2] *Tatler*, No. 52.
[3] *Tatler*, No. 35.
[4] *Tatler*, No. 77.
[5] *Tatler*, No. 37.
[6] *Tatler*, No. 38.

the sort of credit which commerce affects is worthless, if but sustained by the opinions of others and not by its own consciousness of value?[1] Shall we let the smallest of pedants, Will Dactyle, convince us that learning does but improve in us what nature endowed us with; for that not to have good sense with learning is only to have more ways of exposing oneself, and to have sense is to know that learning itself is not knowledge?[2] Shall the best-natured of old men, Senecio, prove to us that the natural and not the acquired man is the companion; that benevolence is the only law of good-breeding; that society can take no account of fortune; and that he who brings his quality with him into conversation, coming to receive homage and not to meet his friends, should pay the reckoning also?[3] Shall we listen to Will Courtly, saying nothing but what was said before, yet appearing neither ignorant among the learned nor indiscreet with the wise, and acknowledge, so long as Will can thus converse with the wittiest without being ridiculous, that, if ceremony is the invention of wise men to keep fools at a distance, good-breeding must be its opposite expedient of putting wise men and less wise on an equality?[4] Shall we make ourselves easy in the company of Sophronius, who, when he does a service, charms us not more by his alacrity than, when he declines one, by his manner of convincing us that such service should not have been asked?[5] Or shall we fidget ourselves in a room with Jack Dimple, who, having found out that what makes Sophronius acceptable is a natural behaviour, in order to the same reputation makes his own entirely artificial, meditates half an hour in the ante-room to get up his careless air,

[1] *Tatler*, No. 48.

[2] *Tatler*, No. 58. This subject he pursues in another admirable Tatler of later date (No. 197), where he points out that "all the true use "of what we call learning is to en- "noble and improve our natural "faculties, and not to disguise our "imperfections. It is therefore in "vain for folly to attempt to conceal "itself by the refuge of learned "languages. Literature does but "make a man more eminently the "thing which Nature made him."

[3] *Tatler*, No. 45.

[4] *Tatler*, No. 30.

[5] *Tatler*, No. 21.

and is continually running back to the mirror to recollect his forgetfulness?[1]

Such are among a few of the characters and essays which, while Mr. Macaulay would represent the *Tatler* as yet given up to sheer commonplace, with a prodigal wit and exuberant fancy Steele was pouring out upon its readers. We touch but slightly these few, and only hint at their purport and design; entering into no more detail than may carry with it the means of outweighing an assertion advanced on authority too high to be met by mere assertion of our own. We leave fifty things unnamed, and take from those named only a sentence here and there: but is it not enough? Not to speak of what will better be described hereafter of social colouring and individual expression, have we not here what gave life to the *Tatler*? Have we not the sprightly father of the English Essay, writing at the first even as he wrote to the last; out of a true and honest heart sympathising with all things good and true; already master of his design in beginning it, and able to stand and move without help of any kind, if the need should be? In his easy chair we shall hereafter see Mr. Bickerstaff, amid the rustling of hoop-petticoats, the fluttering of fans, and the obeisance of flowing perukes: but what here for the present we see is the critic and philosopher Steele, more wise and not less agreeable; who, in an age that faction brutalised and profligacy debased, undertook the censorship of manners, and stamped at once upon the work he invented a genius as original as delightful. Here we have ourselves the means of judging if it was gossip, and compliments, and pasquinades, in the midst of which Addison found his friend; or whether already he had not struck out the thought by which both must be famous for ever, of enlivening morality with wit and tempering wit with morality?

But another fact is not less manifest in the examples

[1] *Tatler*, No. 21.

given, and with it perhaps something of excuse for the half contemptuous tone that has done him such injustice. There is nothing so peculiar to his manner as the art of getting wisdom out of trifles. Without gravely translating his humorous announcement,[1] that, when any part of his paper appeared dull, it was to be noted that there was a design in it, we may say with perfect truth that he had a design in everything. But a laugh never yet looked so wise as a frown; and, unless you are at pains to look a little beneath it, the wisdom of Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff may now and then escape you. The humorous old gentleman who is always prying into his neighbours' concerns, when he is not gossiping of his own; to whom the young beau is made responsible for wearing red-heeled shoes, and the young belle for showing herself too long at her glass; who turns the same easy artillery of wit against the rattling dice-box and the roaring pulpit; who has early notice of most of the love-affairs in town, can tell you of half the domestic quarrels, and knows more of a widow with a handsome jointure than her own lawyer or next of kin; whose tastes take a range as wide as his experience, to whom Plutarch is not less familiar than a pretty fellow, and who has for his clients not only the scholars of the Grecian, but the poets at Will's, the men of fashion at White's, and the quidnuncs of the St. James's, —this old humourist, you would say, is about the last man to pass for a Socrates. And yet there was something more than whim in the good Isaac's ambition to have it said of his lucubrations, that, whereas Socrates had brought philosophy down from heaven to inhabit among men, he had himself aimed to bring philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses. For it is his actual and marked peculiarity that neither more nor less than this may be generally detected in Steele. One of the sincerest of men, he was the most

[1] *Tatler*, No. 33.

natural of writers; and, living in the thick of the world, he could not write but with a vivid and ever present sense of it. The *humanitas humanissima* is never absent from him. If he takes up a book, it is not for a bookish purpose; he is thinking always of the life around him. Never yet, we think, has he had the due and distinctive praise for this, which in some sort separates him from every humourist and satirist of his time. Wit more piercing and keen, a reflective spirit of wider scope, a style more correct and pure, even humour more consummate than his own, will be found, in the way of comment upon life, among his friends and fellow-labourers; but for that which vividly brings actual Life before us, which touches the heart as with a present experience, which sympathises to the very core of all that moves the joy or sorrow of his fellows, and which still, even as then, can make the follies of men ridiculous and their vices hateful without branding ridicule or hate upon the men themselves,—we must turn to Steele. In his little pictures of the world, that open new and unexpected views of it; in his wonderfully pathetic little stories, that fill our eyes with tears; in those trivial details by which he would make life easier and happier, in those accidents the most common and familiar out of which he draws secrets of humanity; what most, after all, impresses us, is a something independent of authorship. We like him the more for being nearer and more like ourselves, not for being higher or standing apart; and it is still the *man* whom his writings make pleasant to us, more than the author, the wit, the partizan, or the fine gentleman.

And a great reason for this we take to be, that he founded his theory and views of life rather on the realities that men should bravely practise, than on the pretences to which for the most part they shamefully submit. To be a man of breeding was with him to be a man of feeling; to be a fine gentleman, in his own phrase, was to be a generous and brave man; he had a proper contempt for the good manners that did not also imply

the good morals ; and it was the exalting and purifying influence of love for Lady Betty Modish, that made his Colonel Ranter cease to swear at the waiters.[1] Be his theme, therefore, small or great, he brings it still within rules and laws which we find have not lost their interest for ourselves; and to which in truth we are in all respects still as amenable, as if the red-heeled shoe, the hooped petticoat, or the flowing peruke, were yet potent and predominant in our century. As an instance which at once will explain our meaning, let us take what he says of vulgarity. It also is in one of these early Tatlers.[2] There is perhaps no word so misused, certainly none of which the misuse is so mischievous ; and not unfairly, by the opinions held of it, we may take the measure of a code of ethics and philosophy.

Steele's view of the matter is, then, that it is to him a very great meanness, and something much below a philosopher, which is what he means by a gentleman, to rank a man among the vulgar for the condition of life he is in, and not according to his behaviour, his thoughts, and his sentiments in that condition.[3] For, as he puts it, if a man be loaded with riches and honours, and in that state has thoughts and inclinations below the meanest workman, is not such a workman, who within his power is good to his friends and cheerful in his occupation, much superior in all ways to him who lives but to serve himself? He then quotes the comparison, from Epictetus,

[1] *Tatler*, No. 10.

[2] *Tatler*, No. 69.

[3] How charmingly he illustrates this in his paper on the death of Richard Eastcourt the comedian, one of his masterpieces of feeling and style, a brief extract will show :

"It is an insolence natural to the "wealthy, to affix, as much as in "them lies, the character of a man to "his circumstances. Thus it is "ordinary with them to praise "faintly the good qualities of those "below them, and say, it is very extraordinary in such a man as he is, "and the like ; when they are forced "to acknowledge the value of him "whose lowness upbraids their exaltation. It is to this humour "only it is to be ascribed, that a "quick wit in conversation, a nice "judgment upon any emergency that "could arise, and a most blameless "inoffensive behaviour, could not "raise this man above being received "only upon the foot of contributing "to mirth and diversion."

of human life to a stage play; in which the philosopher tells us it is not for us to consider, among the actors, who is prince or who is beggar, but who acts prince or beggar best. In other words, the circumstance of life should not be that which gives us place, but our conduct in that circumstance. This alone can be our solid distinction; and from it Steele proceeds to draw certain rules of breeding and behaviour. A wise man, he says, should think no man above him or below him, any further than it regards the outward order or discipline of the world; for, if we conceive too great an idea of the eminence of those above, or of the subordination of those below, it will have an ill effect upon our behaviour to both. With a noble spirit he adds, that he who thinks no man his superior but for virtue, and none his inferior but for vice, can never be obsequious or assuming in a wrong place; but will be ready as frequently to emulate men in rank below him, as to avoid and pity those above. Not that there was anything of the democrat or leveller in Steele. He knew too well that the distinctions of life, if taken at their true worth, would never fail to support themselves; and it was his knowledge of the quite irrepressible influence of wealth and station that urged him to such repeated enforcement of the social charities and duties to which he believed them to be also not less bound. It was no easy part, in his opinion, that the man of rank and wealth had to play. It was no easy thing, in friendly intercourse, to check the desire to assume *some* superiority on the ground of position or fortune. It is not every man, he said with an exquisite felicity of phrase, that can entertain with the air of a guest, and do good offices with the mien of one that receives them.

The subject, having drawn us so far, tempts us to other illustrations. As Steele thus held, in the great commerce of the world, that a man must be valued apart from his circumstances, in like manner he also held, that, in his relations with it, he must regulate what he would appear to be by nothing other than actually becoming it. Nor

is there, in this mode of reasoning, anything too little or too great not to yield as its result, to his philosophy, the value of reality beyond appearance. The fatality, he remarks in the 27th Tatler, under which most men labour, of desiring to be what they are not, makes them go out of a method in which they might be received with applause, and would certainly excel, into one wherein they will all their life have the air of strangers to what they aim at. With him originated the teaching, that a man must not hope to pass for anything more than he is worth; that he must take care of his own wisdom and his own virtue, without minding too much what others think; and that in what he knows himself that he has, can rest his only safe pledge at any time for its acknowledgment by others. Not all the mistakes, he argued, in a noble paper of somewhat later date than these to which we have been referring,[1] committed by the vain and the proud in taking praise for honour and ceremony for respect, could ever tend to make vanity and pride in themselves less ridiculous and odious; for what springs out of falsehood may not be cured by anything short of truth. To no end is it, therefore, that men study to appear considerable, if in their own hearts they be not actual possessors of the requisites for the esteem they seek. What in the former case is impossible, would in this be unavoidable; and it is the only rule to walk by safely. Hence, proceeds Steele, it will be a useful hint in all such cases for a man to ask himself, whether he really *is* what he has a mind to *be thought*; for if he is, he need not give himself much further anxiety. "What will the world "say," would then no longer be his question in matters of difficulty; as if the terror lay wholly in the sense which others, and not ourselves, should have of our actions. And so we should destroy the one fatal source from which have arisen all the impostors in every art and profession, in all places, among all persons, in conver-

[1] *Tatler*, No. 186.

sation, in business, in society, in the world. "Hence "also is it," he adds quietly, and with excellent effect after all his emphasis, "that a vain fellow takes twice as "much pains to be ridiculous as would make him sincerely "agreeable." For we are never to be permitted to lose sight of the fact, that the little and the great subserve still the same truths and laws, in the eyes of our kindly philosopher, tatler, and companion.

To which end, from every part of his delightful book, it would be easy to continue our instances and illustrations, to the still recurring evidence and proof that there is nothing to be imagined so trivial which may not yet be used to establish the superiority of truth over all the affectations and pretences. "I have heard," he remarks in one of the later Tatlers,[1] "my old friend Mr. Hart[2] "speak it as an observation among the players that it is "impossible to act with grace except the actor has forgot "that he is before an audience." Still the reasoning is the same, still the conclusion is unerring, whether the audience be the world, the coffee-house, the drawing-room, or the theatre; and you would hardly suppose, by his manner of handling any, that Mr. Bickerstaff thought the least of less importance than the greatest. For, indeed, in his mode of viewing life, neither is quite independent of the other; and it was he who first compared the man of much knowledge and many thoughts, unpractised in the arts of society, to one who has his pockets full of gold but always wants change for his ordinary occasions. "We see a world "of pains taken," he continues,[3] "and the best years of life "spent, in collecting a set of thoughts in a college for the

[1] *Tatler*, No. 138.

[2] This was the actor to whom Pope makes the characteristic allusion in speaking of Betterton. "I was "acquainted with Betterton from a "boy. . . . Yes, I really think "Betterton the best actor I ever saw; "but I ought to tell you at the same "time that in Betterton's days the "older sort of people talked of Hart's "being his superior, just as we do of "Betterton's being superior to those "now." It is the universal rule in such matters. When Lady Louisa Meyrick was taken to see Mrs. Siddons, she protested that, compared with the favourite of her youth, Mrs. Porter, her grief was the grief of a cheesemonger's wife.

[3] *Tatler*, No. 30.

" conduct of life, and, after all, the man so qualified shall " hesitate in his speech to a good suit of clothes, and " want common sense before an agreeable woman."

The remark opportunely takes us back to those earlier Tatlers which contain it, and to the purpose for which we have referred to them; nor will its hints as to college life render less appropriate the single additional reference we shall make before resuming what waits us still of Mr. Macaulay's censure. In his 39th Tatler, Mr. Bickerstaff visits Oxford: not in search of popular preachers to criticise, of pretty faces to compliment, or of youthful follies to pasquinade; but to refresh his imagination in a scene sacred to civilisation and learning, where so far his own social philosophy prevails that not the fortunes but the understandings of men exact distinction and precedence, and you shall see an Earl walk bareheaded to the son of the meanest artificer, in respect to seven years' more worth and knowledge than the nobleman is possessed of. " The magnificence of their palaces," adds Steele, " the greatness of their revenues, the sweetness " of their groves and retirements, seem equally adapted " for the residence of princes and philosophers; and a " familiarity with objects of splendour, as well as places " of recess, prepares the inhabitants with an equanimity " for their future fortunes, whether humble or illustrious." We think, as we read the paper, of some of the most pleasing turns of Addison.

But, alas! what would be said to such a remark by Mr. Macaulay, who, taking up the project of the *Tatler* at the low design we have seen him attribute to it, proceeds drily to describe its editor as "*not ill*-qualified" to give effect to such a plan? Steele was *not ill*-qualified, that is, to compile news, to give an account of a theatrical representation, to collect literary gossip at Will's and the Grecian, to remark on fashionable topics, to compliment a beauty, to pasquinade a sharper, or to criticise a popular preacher. For, Mr. Macaulay continues, his public intelligence he drew from the best sources; he not only knew

the town, but had paid dear for his knowledge; "he had "read much more" (now, do not let the sanguine reader expect too much) "*than the dissipated men of that time* "were in the habit of reading;" if he was a rake among scholars, he was a scholar among rakes; nay, his style was even easy and not incorrect; and though his wit and humour were of no high order, his gay animal spirits imparted to his compositions an *air of vivacity* which ordinary readers could hardly distinguish from comic genius. "His writings have been well compared to those "light wines which, though deficient in body and flavour, "are yet a pleasant *small drink*, if not kept too long, or "carried too far." It is sufficiently clear, at least, that they have survived too long for Mr. Macaulay. Vinegar is not more sour than the pleasant *small drink*, kept now too long by nearly a century and a half, is become to him.

We must accept it, we suppose, as among the chances and vicissitudes to which old reputations are subject. Steele was famed as a wit before Pope came upon the town, and in those days a young poet who could say he had dined with him was not without claims to consideration.[1] In the succeeding age, this opinion went on gathering strength; and it was enough for a man to have merely written a single paper in one of the works he conducted, to be thought entitled to unquestioned celebrity. "For example," said Murphy to Johnson,[2] "there is Mr. "Ince, who used to frequent Tom's Coffee-house; he has "obtained considerable fame merely from having written "a paper in the *Spectator*." "But," interposed Johnson, "you must consider how highly Steele speaks of Mr. "Ince." The dull Dr. Hurd followed, and brayed Steele down loudly enough; but afterwards came a reaction, the

[1] The reader of Pope will remember his laugh at Ambrose Philips:

"When simple *Macer*, now of high renown,
"First sought a poet's fortune in the town:
"'Twas all the ambition his high soul could feel,
"To wear red stockings, and to dine with Steele."

[2] Boswell's *Life*, 10th April, 1776.

laborious and industrious Nichols produced careful editions of his writings, and he resumed his admitted rank as a humourist of the first order, the most pathetic of story-tellers, the kindest of wits and critics, and, of all the fathers of English Essay, the most natural and the most inventive. Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt, no inconsiderable authorities, even placed him above his friend, on an eminence where we cannot and need not follow them. What now has befallen him in the other extreme we see, and that more than two hundred Tatlers, nearly two hundred and fifty Spectators, and some eighty Guardians, to say nothing of Englishmen, Lovers, Readers, Theatres, Town Talks, Plebeians, Chit Chats, and what not, have failed to win from Mr. Macaulay as much kindly recognition, as the good old Samuel Johnson was ready to reward Mr. Ince with for one Spectator.

But we cannot unresistingly surrender the fame of Steele even to Mr. Macaulay's well-merited fame. To a reputation which time has made classical there belongs what no new reputation can have till it shall in turn become old; and in the attempt to reverse, by a few contemptuous sentences, a verdict of nearly two centuries, it is the assailant who is most in peril. The disadvantage doubtless is great in having to meet a general attack by detailed assertion of the claims denied, but already we have not shrunk from that detail; and still, before entering on such a sketch of Steele's personal career as may best perhaps fix those claims, and ascertain his real place among the men of his time, more of the same kind awaits us. But we will not be tempted into comparisons that would have given pain to his own generous nature. There was no measure to Steele's affection for Addison. Even Fielding's wit could not exaggerate the eagerness with which on all occasions he depreciated his own writings to exaggerate those of his friend. He was above all men in the talent we call humour, he exclaimed again and again; he had it in a form more exquisite and delightful than any other man ever possessed. He declared, in the last

number of the *Tatler*, that its finest strokes of wit and humour had been Addison's. He avowed himself, in the last number of the *Spectator*, more proud of Addison's long-continued friendship than he should be of the fame of being thought even the author of his writings. "I fared like a distressed prince," he said again, speaking of him in the preface to the Tatler's last volume, "who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid. "I was undone by my auxiliary. When I had once "called him in, I could not subsist without dependence "on him." That Addison had changed the design of the paper he never said; but he never tired of saying that his genius had elevated and enriched it. Again, and still again, at various times, he reasserts this with all the hearty warmth of his unselfish and unmisgiving nature. "I rejoiced in being excelled," he exclaims, remarking on Mr. Tickell's not very generous doubts; "and made those "little talents, whatever they are, which I have, give way, "and be subservient to the superior qualities of a friend "whom I loved." Replying to a more savage attack by Dennis, he still contrives occasion to refer to "that excel- "lent man whom Heaven made my friend and superior." Nor had that friend been many weeks in his grave, when, forgetful of all that had clouded their latter intercourse, and having a necessity to mention their joint connection with the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, he describes himself as not merely the inventor of those papers, but the introducer into them of "a much better writer than himself who is "now immortal."[1] Such a feeling we are bound to respect, we think, out of respect to him who entertained it; even while we see that he suffers no disadvantage from such a noble modesty.

We take therefore a specific statement made by Mr. Macaulay, not necessarily involving a comparison, though made to justify the contempt which would sacrifice one reputation to the other; and we shall meet it by some

[1] *The Theatre*, No. 8, Jan. 26, 1719-20.

additional references to Tatlers written by Steele, so made as also to include some means of judgment upon them. After stating that at the close of 1709 the work was more popular than any periodical paper had ever been, and that Addison's connexion with it was generally known, Mr. Macaulay adds that it was not however known that almost everything good in it was his; and that his fifty or sixty numbers were not merely the best, but so decidedly the best that any five of them were more valuable than all the two hundred numbers in which he had no share. In mere extent, we may pause to remark, the participation was not so large; for, of the sixty numbers printed by Tickell, not much fewer than twenty were joint compositions, and Steele bore his full and equal part in those humorous proceedings before the court of honour, where even Bishop Hurd is fain to admit that "Sir Richard "hath acquitted himself better than usual." But to dwell further upon this would involve what we wish to avoid. What is absolutely good, or absolutely bad, is not matter of relation or comparison: and if, upon the examples of Steele's Tatlers which now we are about to add to those already named, any question or doubt can be raised of their wit, feeling, or truth; of their invention, their observation of life and of the shades of character; of their humour, or the high moral tendency of their satire; nay, even of their sweetness, facility, and grace of style; the verdict will pass which determines, not this or that degree of inferiority to his friend, but the issue specifically raised by Mr. Macaulay, of whether or not, independently of such considerations, Steele's title as an English humourist is to be conceded any longer. The statue has been flung down from its pedestal, but its features remain yet undefaced, and upon an honest and impartial judgment of them must rest its claim to be restored.

Our first example shall be a domestic picture, drawn by Steele in two Tatlers of within a few weeks' date of each other (Nos. 95 and 114), which to our thinking includes in itself almost every quality enumerated, and

that in no indifferent degree. It is a common-life interior, of a truth and exactness which Wilkie or Leslie might have painted, and of that kind of pathos and purity which Goldsmith or Dickens might have written. In connexion with it, too, it is to be remembered that at this time, as Mr. Macaulay observes in his Essay, no such thing as the English novel existed. De Foe as yet was only an eager politician, Richardson an industrious compositor, Fielding a mischievous schoolboy, and Smollett and Goldsmith were not born. For your circulating libraries (the first of which had been established some six years before, to the horror of sellers of books, and the ruin of its ingenious inventor) there was as yet nothing livelier, in that direction, than the interminable *Grand Cyrus* of Madame de Scuderi, or the long-winded *Cassandra* and *Pharamond* of the lord of La Calprenede, which Steele so heartily laughed at in his *Tender Husband*.

The little story conveyed in the two papers is of the simplest possible description. Mr. Bickerstaff visits an old married friend, who had been his schoolfellow and his college companion, in whose house he always feels as in a second home, and where, as soon as the family come to town for the winter, he is expected to dinner as a matter of course. How pretty is the opening scene! "I "cannot, indeed, express the pleasure it is to be met by "the children with so much joy as I am when I go "thither. The boys and girls strive who shall come "first, when they think it is I that am knocking at the "door; and that child which loses the race to me runs back "again to tell the father it is Mr. Bickerstaff. This day "I was led in by a pretty girl that we all thought must "have forgot me, for the family has been out of town "these two years. Her knowing me again was a mighty "subject with us, and took up our discourse at the first "entrance." Then follows pleasant raillery of Mr. Bickerstaff from all the circle, upon numberless little stories that had been told of him in the country; the hints they have heard of his marriage with a young lady there; the

hope they express that he will yet give the preference to our eldest daughter, Mrs. Mary, now sixteen; and the father's laughing disbeliefs, founded on Mr. B's love affairs of old, and the verses he wrote on Teraminta. But after dinner the friends are alone, and then fears for his wife's health break from the husband, which the other tries to turn aside; and so arise genial memories of the past, Mr. Bickerstaff talking over all his friend's courting days again, how they first saw her at the playhouse, and it was himself who followed her from the playhouse to ascertain her name, and who carried his friend's first love-letter to her, and who carried it back to him unopened, and how foolishly wretched he then was to think her angry in earnest. But the pleasant memory of sorrow that was unreal, and had passed away, cannot abate the abiding and still recurring fear. "That fading in her countenance," he says, "is "chiefly caused by her watching with me in my fever." But handsomer than ever to him is the pale face; and nothing in all the boisterous passions of their youth, he tells his friend, can compare in depth and intensity with the love he feels in manhood. The poor bachelor thinks, as the other speaks, that now *he* shall never know it. "Her face," continues the husband more calmly, "is to "me much more beautiful than when I first saw it; there "is no decay in any feature which I cannot trace from "the very instant it was occasioned by some anxious con- "cern for my welfare and interests." With which thought, the tide of his sorrow comes again upon him; and he describes his sinking heart as he hears the children play in the next room, and thinks what the poor things shall do when *she* is gone. Whereupon she re-enters; and he brightens again at her cheerful face; and she knows what he has been talking of, and rallies him, and means to have Mr. Bickerstaff for her second husband unless this first will take greater care of himself; and finally gets Mr. Bickerstaff to promise to take her again to the playhouse, in memory of his having followed her one night *from* the playhouse.

The children then reappear to complete a domestic interior, which, at a time when wit had no higher employment than to laugh at the affections and moralities of home, could have arisen only to a fancy as pure as the heart that prompted it was loving and true. The noisiest among them is Mr. Bickerstaff's godson, Dick, in whose conversation, however, though his drum is a little in the way, this nice gradation of incredulity appears, that, having got into the lives and adventures of Guy of Warwick, the Seven Champions, and other historians of that age, he shakes his head at the improbability of Æsop's Fables. But the mother becomes a little jealous of the godson carrying off too much attention; and she will have her friend admire little Mrs. Betty's accomplishments, which accordingly are described; and so the conversation goes on till late, when Mr. Bickerstaff leaves the cordial fireside, considering the different conditions of a married life and that of a bachelor, and goes home in a pensive mood to his maid, his dog, and his cat, who only can be the better or the worse for what happens to him.

But the little story is only half told. Having for its design to show that the pleasures of married life are too little regarded, that thousands have them and do not enjoy them, and that it is therefore a kind and good office to acquaint such people with their own happiness, he with it connects the solemn warning to be drawn from its fleeting tenure, and the limited duration of all enjoyment on earth.

Two months have elapsed, it is the last day of the year, and Mr. Bickerstaff is walking about his room very cheerfully, when a coach stops at his door, a lad of fifteen alights, and he perceives the eldest son of his schoolfellow. The pleasant thought has occurred to him that the father was just such a stripling at the time of their first knowledge of each other, when the boy enters, takes his hand, and bursts into tears. His thought at the moment is with his friend, and with sudden concern he inquires for him. The reply, "My mother ——," and

the tears that choke further utterance, tell Mr. Bickerstaff all. His friend's worst forebodings have come suddenly true. He hurries to the house; meets the celebrated divine, Dr. Smallridge, just quitting it; and, by the suppressed grief of the mourners as he enters, knows what hope and consolation that sacred teaching has left. But the husband, at sight of him, cannot but turn away his face and weep again; and the little family of children renew the expressions of their sorrow, according to their several ages and degrees of understanding. The eldest daughter, in tears, is busied in attendance upon her mother; others are kneeling about the bedside; "and "what troubled me most was to see a little boy, who was "too young to know the reason, weeping only because his "sisters did." In the room there is only one person unmoved; and as he approaches the bed she says in a low broken voice, "This is kindly done. Take care of "your friend—do not go from him!" She has taken leave of them all, and the end is come. "My heart was "torn in pieces to see the husband on one side suppress-"ing and keeping down the swellings of his grief, for "fear of disturbing her in her last moments; and the "wife, even at that time, concealing the pains she "endured, for fear of increasing his affliction. She kept "her eyes upon him for some moments after she grew "speechless, and soon after closed them for ever. In the "moment of her departure, my friend, who had thus far "commanded himself, gave a deep groan, and fell into a "swoon by her bedside." The few calm grave sentences that follow this description are known to have been written by Addison. It would seem as though Steele felt himself unable to proceed, and his friend had taken the pen from his trembling hand.

Need we indicate other stories, told yet more briefly, more in the manner of direct relations, and all of them pathetic in the extreme? Inkle and Yarico, which has filled with tears so many eyes, and the story of Alexander Selkirk, which suggested De Foe's wonderful romance,

belong to Steele's writings in the *Spectator;* but in the *Tatler* we have Valentine and Unnion (No. 5), the Fire at the Theatre (No. 94), the domestic tragedy of Eustace (No. 172), the Shipwreck and the Wedding Day (both contained in No. 82), and the Dream (No. 117). All these tales have an artless, unpretending simplicity, and a charm quite unpremeditated, but which is yet combined with a reality and intensity of pathos, affecting to a degree that the equally brief narrations of any other writer have never, in our judgment, equalled. Of the Dream in especial the contrivance is so inimitable, and the moral so impressive, that within the same compass we know of nothing at all approaching to its effect. A lover and his mistress are toying and trifling together in a summer evening on Dover-cliff; she snatches a copy of verses from his hand and runs before him; he is eagerly following, when he beholds on a sudden the ground sink under her, and she is dashed down the height. "I said to myself, it is not in the power of "Heaven to relieve me! *when I awaked,* equally trans- "ported and astonished to see myself drawn out of an "affliction which, the very moment before, appeared to me "altogether inextricable." This has been given to Addison, but it is certainly Steele's.

It will be consonant with the emotion suggested by it to pass, for our next example, to what is said of untimely deaths in No. 181, one of the most tender and beautiful essays that the *Tatler* contains. Such deaths, says Steele, we are most apt to lament, so little are we able to make it indifferent when a thing happens, though we know it must happen. "Thus we groan under life, and bewail "those who are relieved from it." And especially he applies this to his recollection of the many gallant, gay, and agreeable spirits lost in war, where yet, he finely adds, "We gather relief enough from their own contempt of "death, to make that no evil which was approached with "so much cheerfulness, and attended with so much "honour." He then relates his saddest experience; recalling, in a few short sentences of great delicacy, the

beauty, innocence, and untimely death of the girl he had first loved. "The beauteous virgin! how ignorantly did "she charm, how carelessly excel! O Death! thou hast "right to the bold, to the ambitious, to the high, and to "the haughty; but why this cruelty to the humble, to "the meek, to the undiscerning, to the thoughtless? "Nor age, nor business, nor distress, can erase the dear "image from my imagination. In the same week I saw "her dressed for a ball, and in the shroud. How ill did "the habit of death become the pretty trifler. I still "behold the smiling earth——"

Another treatment of the same grave theme is in the noble character he draws of Addison, under the name of Ignotus. What chiefly makes his friend become this life so perfectly, he says, is his firm and unshaken expectation of another; and he lays it down as the only solid reason for doing all things well, that a man should consider his present being as an uncertain one, and think to reap an advantage by its discontinuance. Such a one, Steele continues, does not behold his existence as a short, transient, perplexing state, made up of trifling pleasures, and great anxieties; but sees it in quite another light: his griefs are momentary and his joys immortal. Reflection upon death is not a gloomy and sad thought of resigning everything that he delights in, but it is a short night followed by an endless day. From all which, and from his friend's ever easy and delightful manners, he draws the conclusion that "to be "a fine gentleman is to be a generous and a brave man." To the same conclusion, too, he brings another thoroughly characteristic paper in No. 246. It is a wise essay on the toleration of one another's faults, pointing out how faintly any excellence is received, and how unmercifully every imperfection is exposed: from which it occurs to him to suggest, that we should all be more considerate to each other, and society a thousand times more easy, if we could better familiarize ourselves to the idea of mortality; if we could bring ourselves to the habit of seeing that we are strangers here, and that it is unreasonable to expect

we should have anything about us as well as at our own home. All faults, he thinks, might then be reduced into those which proceed from malice or dishonesty; it would quite change our manner of beholding one another; nothing that was not below a man's nature would be below his character; the arts of this life would be proper advances towards the next; and a very good man would be a very fine gentleman. As it is now, human life is inverted, and we have not learned half the knowledge of this world before we are dropping into another. All which Steele winds up by saying that old Dick Reptile, who does not want humour, when he sees another old fellow at their club touchy at being laughed at for having fallen behind the mode, bawls in his ear, "Prithee, don't mind him; tell him thou "art mortal."

Their club is the Trumpet, immortalized in No. 132; and out of the many such societies that owed their life to Steele's untiring invention, and that live still by his wit, we may select this one in especial for brief allusion. Its members are smokers and old story-tellers, rather easy than shining companions, promoting the thoughts tranquilly bedward, and not the less comfortable to Mr. Bickerstaff because he finds himself the leading wit among them. There is old Sir Jeffrey Notch, who has had misfortunes in the world, and calls every thriving man a pitiful upstart, by no means to the general dissatisfaction; there is Major Matchlock, who served in the last civil wars, and every night tells them of his having been knocked off his horse at the rising of the London apprentices, for which he is in great esteem; there is honest old Dick Reptile, who says little himself, but who laughs at all the jokes; and there is the elderly Bencher of the Temple, next to Mr. Bickerstaff the wit of the company, who has by heart ten couplets of *Hudibras* which he regularly applies before leaving the club of an evening, and who, if any modern wit or town frolic be mentioned, shakes his head at the dulness of the present age and tells a story of Jack Ogle. As for Mr. Bickerstaff him-

self, he is esteemed among them because they see he is something respected by others; but though they concede to him a great deal of learning, they credit him with small knowledge of the world, "insomuch that the Major some- "times, in the height of his military pride, calls me the "philosopher; and Sir Jeffrey, no longer ago than last "night, upon a dispute what day of the month it was "then in Holland, pulled his pipe out of his mouth, and "cried, 'What does the Scholar say to it?'"

Supplementary to the sketch of these social companions is the paper (208) in which Steele, with as intimate knowledge of nature as of the world, describes the class of easy friends: men with no shining qualities, but in a certain degree above great imperfections; who never contradict us; who gain upon us, not by a fulsome way of commending in broad terms, but by liking whatever we propose to utter; who at the same time are ready to beg our pardons and gainsay us, if we chance to speak ill of ourselves. "We "gentlemen of small fortunes," continues Steele with amusing candour, "are extremely necessitous in this par- "ticular. I have indeed one who smokes with me often; "but his parts are so low, that all the incense he does me "is to fill his pipe with me, and to be out at just as many "whiffs as I take. This is all the praise or assent that "he is capable of; yet there are more hours when I would "rather be in his company, than in that of the brightest "man I know." Which of us will take upon him to say that he has not had some such experience?

But perhaps the most consummately drawn of all his characters is introduced in the essay, No. 127, in which he discourses of, and illustrates in its humbler varieties, that "affection of the mind called pride" which appears in such a multitude of disguises, every one feeling it in himself, yet wondering to see it in his neighbours. Pursuing it to its detection and exposure under the semblance of quite contrary habits and dispositions, he introduces, as the most subtle example of it he had ever known, a person for whom he had a great respect, as being an old courtier and

a friend of his in his youth. And then we have a portrait of that kind which, though produced by a few apparently careless touches, never fades, never ceases to charm, and is a study for all succeeding times and painters. "The "man," says Steele, "has but a bare subsistence, just "enough to pay his reckoning with us at the Trumpet; "but by having spent the beginning of his life in the "hearing of great men and persons of power, he is "always promising to do good offices and to introduce "every man he converses with into the world. He will "desire one of ten times his substance to let him see "him sometimes, and hints to him that he does not for-"get him. He answers to matters of no consequence "with great circumspection; but, however, maintains a "general civility in his words and actions, and an inso-"lent benevolence to all whom he has to do with. "This he practises with a grave tone and air; and though "I am his senior by twelve years, and richer by forty "pounds per annum, he had yesterday the impudence to "commend me to my face and tell me 'he should be "'always ready to encourage me.' In a word, he is a "very insignificant fellow, but exceeding gracious." If there is better observation or writing than this, in either *Tatler* or *Spectator*, we should be very glad to become acquainted with it.

Another distemper of the mind is treated of in No. 227, where he condemns the *nil admirari* as the shallowest of doctrines; points out the great mistake which Milton represents the Devil making when he can find nothing even in Paradise to please him; and looks upon a man as afflicted with disease, when he cannot discern anything to be agreeable which another is master of. We are to remember, Steele shrewdly says, that a man cannot have an idea of perfection in another which he was never sensible of in himself; he is forced to form his conceptions of ideas he has not, by those which he has; and who is there, asking an envious man what he thinks of virtue, need feel surprise if he should call it design, or of good nature,

if he should term it dullness? With this we may connect the very perfect description, in No. 181, of that social nuisance, a professed wag; which never in its life beheld a beautiful object, but sees always what it does see, in the most low and inconsiderable light it can be placed in. The wag's gaiety, Steele adds, consists in a certain professed ill-breeding, as if it were an excuse for committing a fault that a man knows he does so; but the truth is, that his mind is too small for the ability necessary to behold what is amiable and worthy of approbation, and this he attempts to hide by a disregard to everything above what he is able to relish. A yet earlier essay, bearing somewhat upon the same matter, is in No. 92: where, contrary to the common notion, Steele declares his belief that the love of praise dwells most in great and heroic spirits; and that it is those who best deserve it who have generally the most exquisite relish of it. But this also induces a corresponding sensibility to reproach, which is the common weakness of a virtuous man; and for which the only cure is, that they should fix their regard exclusively upon what is strictly true, in relation to their advantage as well as diminution. "For if I am pleased "with commendation which I do not deserve, I shall "from the same temper be concerned at scandal I do not "deserve. But he that can think of false applause with "as much contempt as false detraction, will certainly be "prepared for all adventures, and will become all occa-"sions." Let us add from an essay on impudence, in No. 168, as one of many admirable thoughts conceived in the same noble spirit, that he notes it as a mean want of fortitude in a good man not to be able to do a virtuous action with as much confidence as an impudent fellow does an ill one.

For our next examples, shall we turn to the innumerable little sketches of individual character by which these and other truths are so abundantly and pleasantly enforced, are vivified, and put into action? No unattainable impossible virtues, no abstract speculative vices, occupy

the page of Steele. As promptly as his heart or knowledge suggests, his imagination creates; his fancies crowd in bodily form into life; everything with him becomes actual, and to all his airy nothings he has given lasting habitation and a name.

Shall we take a lesson against over-easiness in temper from the crafty old cit in No. 176, who, speaking of a well-natured young fellow set up with a good stock in Lombard-street, "I will," says he, "lay no more money in his "hands, for he never denied me anything"? Or shall we introduce Tom Spindle from No. 47, who takes to his bed on hearing that the French tyrant won't sign the treaty of peace, he having just written a most excellent poem on that subject? Or, from the proof in No. 173 that by the vanity of silly fathers half the only time for education is lost, shall we make acquaintance with the Shire-lane pastrycook who has an objection to take his son from his learning, but is resolved, as soon as he has a little smattering in the Greek, to put him apprentice to a soap-boiler?[1] Or

[1] This paper exposes with so much force an absurdity still prevalent in education, that it will be worth while to subjoin a few passages. Steele is laughing at the ridiculous way of preferring the useless to the useful in what is taught to children of the middle class, by devoting so much of the time, which, to fall in with their ways and prospects in life, should be spent in learning the useful arts, to the over-cramming of latin and greek, and those kind of accomplishments which they only acquire to forget, or to find utterly useless in their after career. It arises, he says, "from the vanity of "parents who are wonderfully delight-"ed with the thought of breeding their "children to accomplishments, which "they believe nothing but want of the "same care in their own fathers pre-"vented themselves from being mas-"ters of. Thus it is, that the part of "life most fit for improvement is "generally employed in a method "against the bent of nature; and a "lad of such parts as are fit for an "occupation where there can be no "calls out of the beaten path, is two "or three years of his time wholly "taken up in knowing how well "Ovid's mistress became such a dress, "how such a nymph for her cruelty "was changed into such an animal, "and how it is made generous in "Æneas to put Turnus to death: "gallantries that can no more come "within the occurrences of the lives "of ordinary men, than they can be "relished by their imaginations. "However, still the humour goes on "from one generation to another; "and the pastrycook here in the "lane, the other night, told me he "would not yet take away his son "from his learning; but has re-"solved as soon as he had a little "smattering in the Greek to put "him apprentice to a soap-boiler. "These wrong beginnings determine "our success in the world; and when "our thoughts are originally falsely "biassed, their agility and force do "but carry us the further out of our

shall we illustrate the discredit which the morals of the stage then strove to cast upon marriage, and the separate beds, the silent tables, and the solitary homes, which it was the sole ambition of your men of wit and pleasure to contribute to, by presenting, from No. 159, the country squire who set up for a man of the town, and went home "in the "gaiety of his heart" to beat his wife? Or shall we profit by the lecture read in No. 210 to the very fine and very censorious lady of quality, who is for ever railing at the vices of the age, meaning only the single vice she is not guilty of herself; and whose cruelty to a poor girl, who, whatever imperfections may rest on her, is in her present behaviour modest, sensible, pious, and discreet, is indignantly rebuked by Mr. Bickerstaff? Or shall we pursue the same subject in No. 217, and, concerning the same too numerous class, who, because no one can call them one ugly name, think themselves privileged to bestow all kinds of ugly epithets upon every body else, humbly conceive with Mr. Bickerstaff that such ladies have a false notion of a modest woman, and dare to say that the side-boxes would supply better wives than many who pass upon the world and them-

"way, in proportion to our speed. "We are half way our journey, when "we have got into the right road. "But if all our days were usefully "employed, and we did not set out "impertinently, we should not have "so many grotesque professors in "all the arts of life; every man "would be in a proper and becoming "method of distinguishing or enter-"taining himself, suitably to what "nature designed him. As they go "on now, our parents do not only "force us upon what is against our "talents, but our teachers are also "as injudicious in what they put us "to learn. I have hardly ever since "suffered so much by the charms of "any beauty, as I did before I had a "sense of passion, for not apprehend-"ing that the smile of Lalage was "what pleased Horace; and I verily "believe, the stripes I suffered about "*Digito malè pertinaci* have given "me that irreconcilable aversion "which I shall carry to my grave "against coquettes." After that pleasant biographical touch, Steele goes on to characterise Horace with much wit and shrewdness; and, quoting what he had heard a great painter say as to there being certain faces for certain painters as well as certain subjects for certain poets, he adds, "This is as true in the choice "of studies, and no one will ever "relish an author thoroughly well "who would not have been fit com-"pany for that author, had they "lived at the same time. All others "are mechanics in learning, and "take the sentiments of writers like "waiting-servants who repeat what "passed at their master's table, but "debase every thought and expres-"sion for want of the air with which "they were uttered."

selves for modest, and whose husbands know every pain in life with them except jealousy? Or shall we take a different lesson from Jenny Distaff's conversation with her brother Isaac in No. 104, when, being asked the help of his magic to make her always beautiful to her husband, he shows her how an inviolable fidelity, good humour, and complacency of temper, may outlive all the charms of the prettiest face, and make the decays of it invisible? Or shall we observe, in No. 151, the unexpected sources of pride in the two sisters, one of whom holds up her head higher than ordinary from having on a pair of striped garters; or, in No. 127, the fantastic forms of it in the cobbler of Ludgate-hill, who, being naturally a lover of respect, and considering that his circumstances are such that no man living will give it him, reverses the laws of idolatry which require the man to worship the image, and contrives an inferior to himself in the wooden figure of a beau, which, hat in one hand and in posture of profound respect, holds out obsequiously in the other what is needful to its master's occasions? Or, from what is told us in No. 112 of the mischief done in the world from a want of occupation for idle hours, shall we see reason to think an able statesman out of business like a huge whale that will endeavour to overturn the ship, unless he has an empty cask to play with; and to wish with Mr. Bickerstaff, for the good of the nation, that many famous politicians could but take pleasure in feeding ducks? Or finally shall we turn to that ponderous politician but small philosopher, in No. 171, who, with a very awful brow and a countenance full of weight, pronounces it a great misfortune "that men of "letters seldom look into the bottom of things."

That men of letters might always look to Steele for their heartiest champion it would not have been needful to add, but for a proof of it in No. 101 too characteristic not to be mentioned. As on a former occasion we saw Addison, when the grief of his friend seemed to break his utterance, with a calm composure taking up his theme simply to moderate its pain; so, in this paper, to which also both

contribute, and of which the exquisite opening humour closes abruptly in generous indignation, we may see each, according to his different nature, moved by an intolerable wrong. Of the maltreatment of authors, in regard to copyright, both are speaking; and high above the irresistible laugh which Addison would raise against a law that makes only rogues and pirates prosperous, rings out the clear and manly claim of Steele to be allowed to speak in the cause of learning itself, and to lament that a liberal education should be the only one which a polite nation makes unprofitable, and that the only man who cannot get protection from his country should be he that best deserves it. According to the ordinary rules of computation, he says, the greater the adventure, the greater should be the profit of those who succeed: yet he implores his countrymen to consider how expensive is the voyage which is undertaken in the search of knowledge; how few there are who take in any considerable merchandise; how fewer still are those able to turn what they have so gained into profit; and then he asks the question, which it is the disgrace of two subsequent centuries to have left still imperfectly answered, whether it is not "hard, indeed, that the very "small number who are distinguished with abilities to "know how to vend their wares, and have the good for-"tune to bring them into port, should suffer plunder "by privateers under the very cannon that should protect "them?"

Nor less characteristic of that generous nature which reserved its sympathies for no single class, but could enter familiarly into all conditions, and to which nothing could be foreign that concerned humanity, is that paper, No. 87, which in the present crisis of our history[1] should not be the least interesting to us of all the Tatlers. Those, too, were days of war and foreign siege; and while a chorus of continual praise was going up to Marlborough and Eugene, Steele bethought him to single out, as not less

[1] This Essay was written during the War with Russia.

worthy of celebration, the courage and feeling of the private soldier. He sets before us, therefore, as dropped by his servant in dressing him, a supposed letter from one Serjeant Hall to Serjeant Cabe, "in the Coldstream "regiment of Foot Guards, at the Red Lettice in the "Butcher-row, near Temple-bar," by which he would show us the picture of what he calls the very bravest sort of men, "*a man of great courage and small hopes*," and would exemplify the dignity of human nature in all states of life. The letter itself is what we have lately seen, in a hundred forms, from the humble heroes of Alma and Inkermann; it is just such an honest masterpiece as any of those which have made hearts throb and eyes glisten lately; and that the good serjeant himself might have written it, will sufficiently appear from what Steele proceeds pleasantly to say of it. "This is, said I, truly a letter, and an "honest representation of that cheerful heart which "accompanies the poor soldier in his warfare. Is not "there, in this, all the topic of submitting to our destiny "as well discussed as if a greater man had been placed, "like Brutus in his tent at midnight, reflecting on all the "occurrences of past life, and saying fine things on Being "itself? What Serjeant Hall knows of the matter is, that "he wishes there had not been so many killed; and he had "himself a very bad shot in the head, and should recover "if it pleased God. But, be that as it will, he takes care, "like a man of honour as he certainly is, to let the widow "Stevenson know that he had seven and three-pence for "her, and that, if he lives, he is sure he shall go into "garrison at last. I doubt not but all the good company "at the Red Lettice drank his health with as much real "esteem as we do of any of our friends." More thoughtfully Steele adds, with the warmth and wisdom of his generous nature: "If we consider the heap of an army, "utterly out of all prospect of rising and preferment, as "they certainly are, and such great things executed by "them, it is hard to account for the motive of their gal-"lantry; but to me, who know very well this part of

" mankind, I take it to proceed from the same, if not " from a nobler impulse, than that of gentlemen and " officers. They have the same taste of being acceptable " to their friends; and they go through the difficulties of " that profession by the same irresistible charm of fellow- " ship, and the communication of joys and sorrows, which " quickens the relish of pleasure, and abates the anguish " of pain. Add to this, that they have the same regard " to fame, though they do not expect so great a share as " men above them hope for; but I will engage Serjeant " Hall would die ten thousand deaths rather than a word " should be spoken, at the Red Lettice or any part of the " Butcher-row, in prejudice to his courage or honesty."

There spoke a personal experience, as well as a kind heart and a just philosophy. Steele knew very well, as he says, *that part of mankind*, for in the army he had himself mixed with them. Nor will it be inappropriate to interpose, before we pass to our brief sketch of his actual career, allusion to two more papers in which actual experiences are written, and where the charm of his natural style is carried to exquisite perfection.

He describes himself, in No. 263, going to call on a country friend at eight o'clock in the evening, and finding him gone to bed. Next morning he goes at eleven, and finds him sat down to dinner. This leads him to a whimsical description of modern hours, which he compares with the unchanging habits of other creatures. The lark, he observes, rises as early as he did formerly, and the cock begins to crow at his usual hour: whereas, in his own memory, the dinner has crept by degrees from twelve o'clock to three, so that where it will fix, nobody knows; and as for supper, it is so encroached upon that it has been even banished from many families. Yet how many midnight hours will it take the libertine, or the woman of fashion, adequately to replace the loss of a single hour of morning! " When I find myself awakened " into being and perceive my life renewed within me, and " at the same time see the whole face of nature recovered

" out of the dark uncomfortable state in which it lay for " several hours, my heart overflows with such secret sen- " timents of joy and gratitude as are a kind of implicit " praise to the great Author of nature. The mind, in " these early seasons of the day, is so refreshed in all " her faculties, and borne up with such new supplies of " animal spirits, that she finds herself in a state of youth; " above all when the breath of flowers entertains her, the " melody of birds, the dews that hang upon the plants, " and all those other sweets of nature that are peculiar " to the morning. But who can have this relish of being, " this exquisite taste of life, who does not come into the " world before it is in all its noise and hurry? who loses " the rising of the sun, the still hours of the day; and, " immediately upon his first getting up, plunges into the " ordinary cares or follies of the world."

Not to cheerfulness, however, but to sorrow, and not to the still hours of day, but to those of night, the last paper invites us, with which we close our appeal from Mr. Macaulay's judgment.

It is a paper of sadness and self-examination.[1] Conscious of having been giving up too much time to pleasure, he desires to correct the present by recollections of the past, to cast back his thoughts on those who had been dear and agreeable to him, to ponder step by step on the life that was gone, and to revive old places of grief in his memory. " When we wind up a clock that is out of order, " to make it go well for the future, we do not immediately " set the hand to the present instant, but we make it " strike the round of all its hours, before it can recover " the regularity of its time. Such, thought I, shall be " my method this evening; which I dedicate to such in " another life as I much delighted in when living." But we can only take, from this charming and most touching retrospect, his earliest recollection and his earliest grief. " The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the

[1] *Tatler*, No. 181.

" death of my father, at which time I was not quite five " years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the " house meant, than possessed with a real understanding " why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember " I went into the room where his body lay, and my " mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore " in my hand, and fell a beating the coffin, and calling " Papa; for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that " he was locked up there. My mother catched me in her " arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent " grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her " embraces, and told me in a flood of tears, 'Papa could " 'not hear me, and would play with me no more, for " 'they were going to put him under ground, whence he " 'could never come to us again.' She was a very beau- " tiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity " in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport; " which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow, " that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, " seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of " my heart ever since." And so, strengthened by love, if weakened by pity, began the life of Richard Steele.

His family on the father's side were English, but he had an Irish mother; and in Dublin, where his father held the office of secretary to the first Duke of Ormond, he was born in 1675. The Duke was one of the governors of Charter-house, and there Richard Steele was placed, as soon as he could be entered after his father's death. He remained till he was seventeen; and from his ready scholarship of after years, as well as from the kind expressions long interchanged between him and its old head-master, Dr. Ellis, he may be assumed to have passed fairly through the school. Of his positive acquisitions only one is known, but it is by far the most important. Not the glory of his having carried off every prize and exhi-

bition attainable, if such had been his, would have interested us half so much as the fact that here began his friendship with Joseph Addison.

The son of the Dean of Lichfield was three years older than Steele, who was a lad of only twelve, when, at the age of fifteen, Addison went up to Oxford. Three years at that age are the measure of submission or authority, and through life Steele never lost the habit of *looking up* at his friend. He went himself to Oxford in 1692, at the head of that year's post-masters for Merton; but his intercourse with the scholar of Magdalen had not ceased in the interval. Pleasant traces are left for us which connect the little fatherless lad with visitings to Addison's father, who loved him. Like one of his own children he loved me, exclaimed Steele, towards the close of his life. Those children, too, apart from his famous schoolfellow, he thanks for their affection to him; and among the possessions of his youth retained until death, was a letter in the handwriting of the good old Dean, giving "his "blessing on the friendship between his son and me." The little black-eyed dusky-faced lad had made himself popular at the Lichfield deanery; and he brought away from it, we will not doubt, that first ineffaceable impression which remained alike through the weakness and the strength of his future years, that religion was a part of goodness, and that cheerfulness should be inseparable from piety.

Entered of Merton in 1692, his college career is soon told. Having passed three years in a study of which he showed afterwards good use, and in a companionship which confirmed not the least memorable of friendships, he left Oxford with the love of "the whole society,"[1] but without a degree, after writing a comedy which was perhaps as strong a recommendation to the one as a disqualification for the other. He burnt that comedy, however, on a friend telling him it was not worth keeping. Quick,

[1] *Biographia Britannica*, vi. 3823.

inventive, and ardent; easy and sweet in temper, social and communicative in tastes; with eager impulses and warm affections, but yet forming his opinions for himself, and giving them shape and efficacy without regard to consequences; the Dick Steele of Merton was the same Mr. Steele and Sir Richard of Hampton and Bloomsbury, to whose maturer philosophy many charming illustrations have attracted us in the foregoing pages. Having desired his friend's advice about his comedy, he had too much sincerity and too little pride not at once to act upon it; but he was also too impatient not to ask himself afterwards, If he was to fail as a wit and a writer, in what other direction lay the chances of success? Already a hot politician, and entering with all his heart into the struggle of which the greatest champion now sat on the English throne, might he not at any rate, on his hero's behalf, throw a sword if not a pen into the scale? He would be a soldier. He would, as he says, plant himself behind King William III against Louis XIV. But here he was met by determined opposition; and a rich relative of his mother, who had named him heir to a large estate in Wexford, threatened to disinherit him if he took that course. He took it, and was disinherited; giving the express reason, many years later, that, when he so cocked his hat, put on a broad sword, jack-boots, and shoulder-belt, and mounted a war-horse, under the unhappy Duke of Ormond's command, *he was not acquainted with his own parts*, and did not know, what he had since discovered, that he could handle a pen more effectively than a sword.[1] What do we see in all this but an earlier form of the philosophy of the *Tatler*, that you must *be* the thing you would seem to be, and in some form manage to *do* what you think it right should be done?

Baffled in his hope to obtain a commission, Steele entered the army as a private in the Horse Guards, preferring, as he characteristically expresses it, the state of

[1] *The Theatre*, No. xi.

his mind to that of his fortune. Soon, however, the qualities which made him the delight of his comrades, obtained him a cornetcy in the regiment; and not long after, through the interest of its colonel, Lord Cutts, to whom he had acted as private secretary, he got a company in Lord Lucas's fusiliers, and became *Captain* Steele. Then began the experiences and temptations he has himself described. He found it, he says, a way of life exposed to much irregularity; and, being thoroughly convinced of many things, of which he often repented and which he more often repeated, he writ, for his own private use, a little book called the *Christian Hero*.[1] Nevertheless, this little book is not exactly what the good Dr. Drake, and many before him and since, appear to have thought it. You would suppose, from what is said of it, that it was "a valuable little manual" of religious exercises for use in "the intervals snatched from the orgies of voluptuous-"ness." But it is by no means this, nor anything else that would amount to such sheer fooling and face-making. Steele had too humble and pious a faith in religion to expose it to ridicule from the unscrupulous companions he lived with. How large and longing is the mind of man, compared with the shortness of his life and the frailty of his desires, he knew; and that his own thoughts were better than his practice, it was no discredit to him also to know. But it was not to set up the one either as a cloak or a contrast to the other that he wrote the *Christian Hero*. It was not a book of either texts or prayers. There was nothing in it that a man conscious of all infirmities might not write; but there was also that in it which must have made its writer more conscious of his powers than he had been till then, and which influenced his future perhaps more than any one has supposed.[2]

[1] *Apology*, p. 296.

[2] Perhaps Steele has no where so beautifully expressed the spirit in which he wrote this book, than by that fine paper (No. 27) of the *Spectator*, in which he says: "There is scarce "a thinking man in the world, who "is involved in the business of it, "but lives under a secret impatience "of the hurry and fatigue he suffers, "and has formed a resolution to fix "himself, one time or another, in

At the outset of it he tells you that men of business, whatever they may think, have not nearly so much to do with the government of the world as men of wit; but that the men of wit of that age had made a grave mistake in disregarding religion and decency. He attributes it to classical associations, that, being scholars, they are so much more apt to resort to Heathen than to Christian examples; and to correct this error he proposes to show, by a series of instances, how inadequate to all the great needs of life is the Heathen, and how sufficient the Christian morality. Anticipating and answering Gibbon, he

"such a state as is suitable to the "end of his being. You hear men "every day in conversation profess "that all the honour, power, and "riches which they propose to them- "selves, cannot give satisfaction "enough to reward them for half the "anxiety they undergo in the pur- "suit or possession of them. While "men are in this temper (which "happens very frequently), how in- "consistent are they with them- "selves! They are wearied with "the toil they bear, but cannot find "in their hearts to relinquish it; "retirement is what they want, but "they cannot betake themselves to "it; while they pant after shade "and covert, they still affect to "appear in the most glittering scenes "of life: but sure this is only just as "reasonable as if a man should call "for more lights, when he has a "mind to go to sleep.

"Since, then, it is certain that our "own hearts deceive us in the love "of the world, and that we cannot "command ourselves enough to resign "though we every day wish our- "selves disengaged from its allure- "ments, let us not stand upon a "formal taking of leave, but wean "ourselves from these, while we are "in the midst of them.

"It is certainly the general inten- "tion of the greater part of mankind "to accomplish this work, and live "according to their own approbation, "as soon as they possibly can; but "since the duration of life is so un- "certain, and that this has been a "common topic of discourse ever "since there was such a thing as life "itself, how is it possible that we "should defer a moment the begin- "ning to live according to the rules "of reason?

"The man of business has ever "some one point to carry, and then "he tells himself he'll bid adieu to "all the vanity of ambition; the "man of pleasure resolves to take "his leave at last, and part civilly "with his mistress. But the am- "bitious man is entangled every "moment in a fresh pursuit, and the "lover sees new charms in the object "he fancied he could abandon. It is, "therefore, a fantastical way of think- "ing, when we promise ourselves an "alteration in our conduct from "change of place, and difference of "circumstances. The same passions "will attend us wherever we are, till "they are conquered; and we can "never live to our satisfaction in the "deepest retirement, unless we are "capable of so living in some measure "amidst the noise and business of the "world."

And so, when that problem is solved as the kindly philosopher would have solved it, we shall have men at last living really in the day that is present, and not putting life continually off until to-morrow, or to that some other time which is so little likely, for any of us, ever to arrive.

looks upon it as the special design of Providence that the time when the world received the best news it ever heard, was also that when the warriors and philosophers whose virtues are most pompously arrayed in story should have been performing, or just have finished, their parts. He then introduces, with elaborate portraiture of their greatness, Cato, the younger Brutus, and other characters of antiquity; that he may also display them, in their moments of highest necessity, deprived of their courage, and deserted by their gods. By way of contrast he next exhibits, "from a certain neglected Book, which is called, and from "its excellence above all other books deservedly called, "The Scripture," what the Christian system is; handling it with no theological pretension, but as the common inheritance vouchsafed to us all. He finds in the Sermon on the Mount "the whole heart of man discovered by Him "that made it, and all our secret impulses to ill, and false "appearances of good, exposed and detected;" he shows through what storms of want and misery it had been able to bear unscathed the early martyrs and apostles; and, in demonstration of the world's present inattention to its teaching, he tells them that, after all they can say of a man, let them but conclude that he is rich, and they have made him friends, nor have they utterly overthrown him till they have said he is poor. In other words, a sole consideration to prosperity had taken, in their imaginations, the place of Christianity; and what is there that is not lost, pursues kind-hearted Steele, in that which is thus displaced? "For Christianity has that in it which "makes men pity, not scorn, the wicked; and, by a "beautiful kind of ignorance of themselves, think those "wretches their equals." It aggravates all the benefits and good offices of life by making them seem fraternal, and its generosity is an enlarged self-love. The Christian so feels the wants of the miserable, that it sweetens the pain of the obliged; he gives with an air that has neither oppression nor superiority in it, "and is always a benefactor "with the mien of a receiver."

In an expression already quoted from the *Tatler* we have seen a paraphrase of these last few words; but indeed Mr. Bickerstaff's practical and gentle philosophy, not less than his language, is anticipated by Captain Steele. The spirit of both is the same. The leading purpose in both is a hearty sympathy with humanity: a belief, as both express it, that "it is not possible for a human heart to "be averse to anything that is human;" a desire to link the highest associations to the commonest things; a faith in the compatibility of mirth with virtue; the wish to smooth life's road by the least acts of benevolence as well as by the greatest; and the lesson so to keep our understandings balanced, that things shall appear to us "great "or little as they are in nature, not as they are gilded or "sullied by accident and fortune." The thoughts and expressions, as may be seen in these quoted, are frequently the same; each has the antithetical turns and verbal contrasts, "the proud submission, the dignified "obedience," which is a peculiarity of Steele's manner; in both we have the author aiming far less to be author than to be companion; and there is even a passage in this *Christian Hero* which brings rustling about us the hoops and petticoats of Mr. Bickerstaff's Chloes and Clarissas. He talks of the coarseness and folly, the alternate rapture and contempt, with which women are treated by the wits; he desires to see the love they inspire taken out of that false disguise, and put in its own gay and becoming dress of innocence; and he tells us that "in their tender frame "there is native simplicity, groundless fear, and little "unaccountable contradictions, upon which there might "be built expostulations to divert a good and intelligent "young woman, as well as the fulsome raptures, guilty "impressions, senseless deifications, and pretended deaths, "that are every day offered her." Captain Steele dedicates his little book to Lord Cutts, dates it from the Tower Guard, and winds it up with a parallel between the French and the English king, not unbecoming a Christian soldier. But surely, as we read it on to its close, the cocked hat,

the shoulder-belt, the jack-boots disappear; and we have before us, in gown and slippers, the Editor of the *Tatler*. Exit the soldier, and enter the wit.

The publication of the *Christian Hero*, in 1701, is certainly the point of transition. He says himself that after it he was not thought so good a companion, and that he found it necessary to enliven his character by another kind of writing. The truth is that he had discovered, at last, what he best could do; and where in future he was to mount guard was not at the Tower, or under command of my Lord Cutts, but at the St. James's coffee-house, or Will's, in waiting on Mr. Congreve. The author of the *Old Bachelor* and *Love for Love* now sat in the chair just vacated by Dryden; and appears to have shown unusual kindness to his new and promising recruit. In a letter of this date he talks of Dick Steele with an agreeable air of cordiality; and such was then Mr. Congreve's distinction, that his mere notice was no trifling feather in the cap of an ex-captain of Fusileers. "I hope I may have leave to "indulge my vanity," says Steele, "by telling all the "world that Mr. Congreve is my friend." The *Muse's Mercury* not only told the world the same thing, but published verses of the new Whig wit, and threw out hints of a forthcoming comedy.

The *Funeral, or Grief à la Mode*, Steele's first dramatic production, was played at Drury Lane in 1702. Very sprightly and pleasant throughout, it was full of telling hits at lawyers and undertakers; and, with a great many laughable incidents, and no laugh raised at the expense of virtue or decency, it had one character (the widow on whom the artifice of her husband's supposed death is played off) which is a masterpiece of comedy. Guardsmen and Fusileers mustered strong on the first night; in the prologue, "a fellow soldier" made appeal to their soldierly sympathies; Cibber, Wilks, Norris, and Mrs. Oldfield were in the cast; and the success was complete. One can imagine the enjoyment of the scene where the undertaker reviews his regiment of mourners, and singles

out for indignant remonstrance one provokingly hale, well-looking mute. "You ungrateful scoundrel, did not "I pity you, take you out of a great man's service, and "show you the pleasure of receiving wages? Did not I "give you ten, then fifteen, now twenty shillings a week, "to be sorrowful. *And the more I give you, I think the "gladder you are!*" But this was a touch that should have had for its audience a company of Addisons rather than of gay Fusileers and Guardsmen. Sydney Smith, indeed, who delighted in it, used to think it Addison's; but certainly Steele's first comedy had no insertion from that masterly hand. When it was written Addison was in Italy, when it was acted he was in Geneva; and he did not return to England, after an absence of more than four years, till towards the close of the following autumn.

He found his friend not only established among the wits, but enrolled in that most select body of their number who drank Whig toasts at the Kit-Katt, with the prudent Mr. Tonson at one end of the table and the proud Duke of Somerset at the other. For the comedy had brought him repute in high Whig quarters, and even the notice of the King. He was justly proud of this. It was much to say, from experience, that nothing could make the town so fond of a man as a successful play; but more to have it to remember that "his name to be provided for, was in "the last table-book ever worn by the glorious and immor-"tal William III."[1] Yes, the last. Between the acting of his comedy and the arrival of his friend, their great sovereign had ceased to be mortal. Somewhat sad were Whig prospects, therefore, when Addison again grasped Steele by the hand; but the Kit-Katt opened its doors eagerly to the new comer, the first place at Will's and the St. James's was conceded to him, and the *Noctes Cœnæque Deorum* began. Many have described and glorified them; and Steele coupled them in later years with a yet rarer felicity, when he had to tell of "nights spent with him apart from all

[1] *Apology*, p. 227.

"the world," in the freedom and intimacy of their old school days of Charter-house, and their College walks by the banks of the Cherwell. There is no such thing as real conversation, Addison used to say, but between two persons; and after nights so passed, Steele could only think of his friend as combining in himself all the wit and nature of Terence and Catullus, heightened with a humour more exquisite and delightful than either possessed, or than was ever the property of any other man.

Of course Captain Steele (for so, according to Mr. Dennis, he continued to be called at the theatres)[1] had by this

[1] How popular Steele was at the theatres, and himself how fond of them, needs hardly to be said. Some of his finest pieces of criticism are on Betterton and Eastcourt. He describes himself as Mr. Bickerstaff carrying his little cousin to see the *Hamlet* of the great tragedian, and tells us he shall always love the little chap for his partiality in all that concerned the fortune of *Hamlet*. "This" he continues "is entering youth into the "affections and passions of manhood "beforehand, and, as it were, ante-"dating the effects we hope from a "long and liberal education." In the same spirit is that delightful paper (182) in which, after speaking of Eugenio's gallery of fine pictures, and the grand woods and fields of Crassus, he says, that the players are *his* pictures and the scenes *his* territories, and (prefacing thus his recommendation of the young poet, Leonard Welsted, to instruct whom in the art of comedy he has asked Cibber and Wilks to act the *Careless Husband*) he goes on to give a specimen of his most nicely discriminative criticism. A brief passage will suffice: "It is," he says, "a very good office "one man does another, when he "tells him the manner of his being "pleased; and I have often thought "that a comment upon the capacities "of the players would very much "improve the delight that way, and "impart it to those who otherwise "have no sense of it. The first of "the present stage are Wilks and "Cibber, perfect actors in their "different kinds. Wilks has a sin-"gular talent in representing the "graces of nature; Cibber the de-"formity in the affectation of them. "Were I a writer of plays, I should "never employ either of them in "parts which had not their bent this "way. This is seen in the inimitable "strain and run of good humour "which is kept up in the character "of Wildair, and in the nice and "delicate abuse of understanding in "that of Sir Novelty. Cibber, in "another light, hits exquisitely the "*flat* civility of an affected gentleman-"usher, and Wilks the easy frank-"ness of a gentleman." Nothing could be better said than that. Nor must I omit what he afterwards wrote (No. 188) by way of a parody on this criticism, but with infinite good humour in the satire, in answer to a demand from two walking gentlemen of the stage, Mr. William Bullock, and Mr. William Penkethman, that the same justice should be done to *them*. "Mr. William Bullock," he says, "and Mr. William Penkethman "are of the same age, profession, and "sex. They both distinguish them-"selves in a very particular manner "under the discipline of the crab-"tree, with this only difference, that "Mr. Bullock has the more agreeable "squall, and Mr. Penkethman the

time begun another comedy, and from his friend he received for it not a few of what he generously said afterwards were its most applauded strokes. Nor is it difficult, we think, to trace Addison's hand in the *Tender Husband*. There is a country squire and justice of the quorum in it, perhaps the very first the stage had in those days brought from his native fields for any purpose more innocent than to have horns clapped on his head; and in the scenes with him and his lumpish nephew, there is a heightened humour we are disposed to give to Addison. But Steele's rich invention, and careless graces, are also very manifest throughout; and in the dialogues of the romance-stricken niece and her lover, from which Sheridan borrowed, and in that of the niece and her bumpkin of a cousin, to which even Goldsmith was somewhat indebted, we have pure and genuine comedy. The mistake of the piece, as of its predecessor, is the occasional disposition to reform morals rather than to paint manners; for the rich vein which the *Tatler* worked to such inimitable uses, yielded but scantily to the working of the stage. But the *Tender Husband*, admirably acted by Wilks, Norris, and Eastcourt, and above all by Mrs. Oldfield in that love-lorn Parthenissa, Biddy Tipkin, well deserved its success. Before its production there had arrived the glorious news of Blenheim, and Steele flung in some Whiggish and patriotic touches. Addison wrote the prologue, and to Addison the piece was dedicated: the author taking that means of declaring publicly to the world that he looked upon this intimacy as the most valuable enjoyment of his life, and hoping also to make the Town no ill compliment for their kind acceptance of his comedy by acknowledging, that this had so far raised his own opinion of it as to make him think it no improper memorial of an inviolable friend-

"more graceful shrug. Penkethman "devours a cold chick with great "applause; Bullock's talent chiefly "lies in asparagus. Penkethman is "very dexterous at conveying himself "under a table; Bullock is no less "active at jumping over a stick. Mr. "Penkethman has a great deal of "money; but Mr. Bullock is the "taller man."

ship. To Addison he addressed at the same time a more private wish, which lay very near his heart. "I told him "there was nothing I so ardently wished, as that we might "sometime or other publish a work written by us both, "which should bear the name of The Monument, in "memory of our friendship."[1] Such a work, under a livelier title, not planned with that view by either friend, was soon to perpetuate, and inseparably to connect, the names of both.

Meanwhile, after two or three years of adversity and depression, the Whig cause had again brightened. The great foreign policy of William coerced, as with a spell, the purposes of his successors; and again, with the victory of Blenheim, Whig principles obtained the mastery. But, in the interval of gloomy and variable weather, many changes had by degrees become also perceptible in the places of resort which the wits made famous. The coffee-house had ceased to be any longer such neutral ground as it had formerly been. Men are more jealous of their opinions when their opinions are less prosperous, more eager themselves to champion them, and less tolerant of others who oppose them. Literature itself took insensibly a stronger tone, and a higher position, in those stormy and threatening days. It was the only direct communication between the men who governed the State, and the people from whom, if the Act of Settlement was to have any authority, they received their sole commission to govern it. Halifax, Somers, Sunderland, Cowper, indeed all the leading Whig lords, knew this thoroughly; and if they had acted on it less partially, they would have kept their ground better than they did. When Mr. Mackey, in his *Memoirs of his Secret Services*, says of Halifax that he was a great encourager of learning and learned men, Swift grimly writes in the margin that "his encouragement were only good words "and dinners." But *that* at any rate was something. At such a time as the present it was much. When Blen-

[1] *The Spectator*, No. 555.

heim made a "new" Whig of the Tory Lord Treasurer, a good word from Halifax got Addison a commissionership of two hundred a year from him; and while the restoration of the old Whigs was yet doubtful, the dinners of Halifax at least kept their partisans together, and Prior himself was rendered not less steady than even Ambrose Philips or Steele.

But, as we have said, prospects in that direction were brightening at last. Events were accomplishing, of themselves, what the actors in them had not the power to prevent; and, through whatever remaining obstacle or hindrance, for the present the plain result had become too imminent to be much longer delayed by any possible combination of clergy and country gentlemen. What was done with such a hope only hastened the catastrophe. Oddly enough, however, it happened just at this time that the only consolation of which the circumstances were capable, was suggested by a member of the one disheartened class to a member of the other. It was at the St. James's coffee-house, now the great Whig resort, but into which there had stumbled one day, when all the leading wits were present, a "gentleman "in boots just come out of the country." Already also, on that day, a clergyman of remarkable appearance had been observed in the room. Of stalwart figure, with great sternness and not much refinement of face, but with the most wonderful blue eyes looking out from under black and heavy brows, he had been walking half an hour or so incessantly to and fro across the floor without speaking to anybody; when at last, on the entrance of the booted squire, up went the walking priest to him, and asked this question aloud: "Pray, Sir, do you remember any good "weather in the world?" The country gentleman was of course unprepared for anything in the way of allegory, and stammered out an answer which did little credit to him as an agriculturist. "Yes, Sir, I thank God I "remember a great deal of good weather in my time." To which the querist rejoined, "That is more than I can "say. I never remember any weather that was not too

" hot or too cold, too wet or too dry; but, however God " Almighty contrives it, at the end of the year 'tis all " very well "—took up his hat, and without another word to anybody walked out of the room.'

That was the first introduction of Steele and Addison to the Reverend Jonathan Swift. Not long after, however, they knew in him not only " the mad parson," but the writer of one of the most effective of Whig pamphlets, the author of the most masterly prose satire published since Rabelais, the foremost intellect, and one of the first wits of the day. Nor was he, to them, the least delightful of associates. Charles Fox had a theory about Swift, that he could not have written the heaps of nonsense he entertained his friends with, unless he had been at heart a good-natured man. All at any rate were agreed as to his wonderful and unequalled fascination in society, at such times as he pleased to exert it. When Addison, shortly after this date, gave him his book of travels, he wrote on its fly-leaf that it was given to the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of the age. Happily none of them yet knew what his master-passion was, of what little value he counted friendships or alliances that might thwart it, with what secret purpose he sought the power to be derived from literary distinction, to what uses he would have turned his influence over those Whig wits at the St. James's coffee-house, and what a dreary and unsatisfactory past he was there himself to redeem. As yet they saw him only in his amiable aspect; somewhat perhaps condescending to their mirth, but sharing in it nevertheless, and, when he pleased, making it run over with abundance. Indeed he cared so little for what was matter of real moment to them, that he was able often to pass for a good-natured man in points where they failed to show good nature. " I have great credit with him," he wrote of an indifferent verse-writer to Ambrose Philips, when a foreign employment had for a time carried off that staunch Whig poet, " because I can listen when he reads, " which neither you nor the Addisons nor Steeles ever

"can." It is the same letter in which he tells Ambrose that the "triumvirate" of Addison, Steele, and himself, come together as seldom as the sun, moon, and earth; though he often sees each of them, and each of them as often him and each other; but, when he is of their number, justice is done to Ambrose as he would desire.

No doubt, when the triumvirate were thus together, Swift could do justice also, in his dry way, to the pretty little opera of *Rosamund* which Mr. Addison had permitted to be represented, and which, though it brought him no repute, added another member to the circle who surrounded him—the "senate," as Pope afterwards called them—in the person of that young Mr. Tickell of Oxford who addressed to him a poem in admiration of it. One may imagine, too, that while Swift bore with much equanimity Mr. Addison's failure on that occasion, he might be even disposed to make merry at a certain contemporaneous failure of the other member of the triumvirate, who, having proposed to give a dramatic form to Jeremy Collier's *Short View*, and to introduce upon the stage itself that slashing divine's uncompromising strictures of it, produced his *Lying Lover;* and had the honour to inform the House of Commons some years later, that he alone, of all English dramatists, had written a comedy which was damned for its piety. This surprising incident closed for the present Captain Steele's dramatic career; and when the *Muse's Mercury* next introduced his name to its readers, it was to say that, as for comedies, there was no great expectation of anything of that kind since Mr. Farquhar's death, for "the two gentlemen who would "probably always succeed in the comic vein, Mr. Con-"greve and Captain Steele, have affairs of much greater "importance at present to take up their time and "thoughts."

Soon after his pious failure, in truth, he had received from the gift of Harley what he calls the lowest office in the State, that of Gazetteer, and with it the post of Gentleman-Usher in the household of Prince George. It

was not long before Harley's own resignation that he had to thank him for this service; and it was at the very time when the old Whigs were to all appearance again firmly established, and Addison was Under-Secretary of State, that heavings of no distant change became again perceptible. Writers themselves were beginning to sway from side to side as preferments fell thick. There was Rowe coming over from the Tories, and there was Prior going over from the Whigs;[1] and there was the "mad parson" of the St. James's coffee-house talking his *Tract on Civil Discords* to alarm the Tories, or his *Tale of a Tub* to alarm the Whigs, according as either side for the time inclined. And in the midst of these portents, as we have said, Mr. Harley quitted office; and the Whig phalanx little dreamed what he went to plan and meditate in his compelled retirement.

But in other than political ways the current of life was moving on with Steele, and matters of private as well as public concern had to do with his secession from the theatre. Some little time before this, he had received a moderate fortune in West India property with his first wife, the sister of a planter in Barbados; and he had been left a widower not many months after the marriage. Just before Harley left the ministry, he married again; and, of every letter or note he addressed to his second wife during the twelve years of their union, that lady proved herself so curiously thrifty, whether for her own comfort in often reading his words or for his plague in often repeating them, that the public curiosity was gratified at the commencement of the century by the publication of

[1] In the *Hanmer Correspondence*, published not many years ago, we have a significant letter from Prior to Hanmer dated in 1707, and referring to another accession the Whigs had lately had in the person of Mr. Edmund Smith, who dedicated his play to Lord Halifax. "*Phædra* is "a prostitute, and Smith's dedication "is nonsense. People do me a great "deal of honour. They say when "you and I had lookt over this piece "for six months, the man could "write verse; but when we had for-"saken him, and he went over to "St—— and Addison, he could not "write prose: you see, Sir, how "dangerous it is to be well with you; "a man is no longer father of his own "writings, if they are good."

upwards of four hundred such compositions; and thus the most private thoughts, the most familiar and unguarded expressions, weaknesses which the best men pass their lives in concealing, self-reproaches that only arise to the most generous natures, everything, in short, that Richard Steele uttered in the confidence of an intimacy the most sacred, and which repeatedly he had begged "might be "shown to no one living," became the property of all the world. It will be seen, as we proceed, how he stands a test such as never was applied, within our knowledge, to any other man on earth.

"Happy is the wooing that is not long a-doing," and Steele's does not seem to have been prolonged beyond a month. But his letters are such masterpieces of ardour and respect, of tender passion and honest feeling, of good sense and earnestness as well as of playful sweetness, that the lady may fairly be forgiven for having so soon surrendered. Instead of saying he shall die for her, he protests he shall be glad to lead his life with her; and on those terms she accepts, to use the phrase she afterwards applied to him, "as agreeable and pleasant a man "as any in England." Once accepted, his letters are incessant. He writes to her every hour, as he thinks of her every moment, of the day. He cannot read his books, he cannot see his friends, for thinking of her. While Addison and he are together at Chelsea, he steals a moment, while his friend is in the next room, to tell the charmer of his soul that he is only and passionately hers. In town, he seems to have shared Addison's lodgings at this time; for, not many weeks afterwards, he tells her "Mr. "Addison does not remove till to-morrow, and therefore "I cannot think of moving my goods out of his lodgings." Thus early she seems to have contracted that habit of calling Addison her "rival," which he often charges on her in subsequent years; and who will doubt that the Under-Secretary, rigid moralist as he was, formed part of the "very good company," who not many days before the marriage drank Mrs. Mary Scurlock's health (such was

her name: she was the daughter and sole heiress of Jonathan Scurlock, Esq. of the county of Carmarthen) by the title of *the woman Dick Steele loves best*, to an extent it would hardly be decorous now to mention? The last few days before the wedding are the least tolerable of all. If he calls at a friend's house, he must borrow the means of writing to her. If he is at a coffee-house, the waiter is despatched to her. If a minister at his office asks him what news from Lisbon, he answers she is exquisitely handsome. If Mr. Elliott desires at the St. James's to know when he has been last at Hampton-court, he replies it will be Tuesday come se'ennight. For the happy day was fixed at last; and on "Tuesday come se'ennight," the 9th of September 1707, the adorable Molly Scurlock became Mrs. Richard Steele.

It does not fall within our purpose to dwell in much detail upon so large a subject as this lady's merits and defects, but some circumstances attended the marriage of a nature to make some of its early results less surprising. In her fortune of 400*l* a-year her mother had a life-interest, and she does not seem to have regarded favourably any of the plans the newly-married couple proposed. On the other hand, Steele had certainly over-estimated his own income; and a failure in his Barbados estate made matters worse in this respect. Eager meanwhile to show all distinction to one he loved so tenderly, and believing, as he wrote to her mother, that the desire of his friends in power to serve him more than warranted the expectations he had formed, his establishment was larger than prudence should have dictated. Mrs. Steele had a town-house in Bury-street, St. James's; and within six weeks of the marriage, her husband had bought her a pretty little house at Hampton-court which he furnished handsomely, and pleasantly called, by way of contrast to the Palace by the side of which it stood, the Hovel. In the neighbourhood lived Lord Halifax; between whom and Steele as well as Addison there was such frequent intercourse at the time, that this probably led to Steele's first unwise

outlay, which Addison helped to make up by a loan of a thousand pounds. In something less than a year (the 20th of August 1708) the whole of this loan was repaid; but soon after, the same sort of thing re-appears in the correspondence; and not until some eight or nine years later does it entirely disappear, after a manner to be related hereafter, and very needlessly mis-related hitherto. Thus established at Hampton-court, Mrs. Steele drives her chariot and pair; upon occasion, even her four horses. She has a little saddle-horse of her own, which costs her husband five shillings a week for his keep, when in town. She has also Richard the footman, and Watts the gardener, and Will the boy, and her "own" women, and an additional boy who can speak Welsh when she goes down to Carmarthen. But also, it must be confessed, she seems to have had a frequent and alarming recurrence of small needs and troubles which it is not easy to account for. If it be safe to take strictly the notes she so carefully preserved, she was somewhat in the position pleasantly described by Madame Sévigné, in her remark to the Countess Calonne and Madame Mazarine when they visited her on their way through Arles: "My dears, you are like the heroines of "romances; jewels in abundance, but scarce a shift to "your backs!"

In the fifth month after their marriage, Steele writes to her from the Devil Tavern at Temple-bar (Ben Jonson's house), to tell her he cannot be home to dinner; but that he has partly succeeded in his business, and that he incloses two guineas as earnest of more, languishes for her welfare, and will never be a moment careless again. Next month, he is getting Jacob Tonson to discount a bill for him, and he desires that the man who has his shoemaker's bill should be told that he means to call on him as he goes home. Three months later, he finds it necessary to sleep away from home for a day or two, and orders the printer's boy to be sent to him with his night-gown, slippers, and clean linen, at the tavern where he is. But, in a few days, all seems prosperous again: she calls for him in her coach

at Lord Sunderland's office, with his best periwig and new shoes in the coach-box, and they have a cheerful drive together. Not many days later, just as he is going to dine with Lord Halifax, he has to inclose her a guinea for her pocket. She has driven in her chariot-and-four to Hampton-court on the Tuesday, and on the Thursday he sends her a small quantity of tea she was much in want of. On the day when he had paid Addison back his first thousand pounds, he incloses for her immediate uses a guinea and a half. The day before he and "her favourite" Mr. Addison are going to meet some great men of the State, he sends her a quarter of a pound of black tea, and the same quantity of green. The day before he goes into his last attendance at Court upon Prince George, he conveys to her a sum so small, that he can only excuse it by saying he has kept but half as much in his own pocket. And a few days after Mr. Addison has taken him in a coach-and-four to dine with his sister and her husband, he tells his dearest Prue that he has despatched to her seven pennyworth of walnuts, at five a penny; the packet containing which he opens with much gravity before it goes, to inform her that since the invoice six walnuts have been abstracted.

In that humorous touch, not less than in the change from his "dearest Molly," to his "dearest Prue," by which latter name he always in future called her, we get glimpses of the character of Mrs. Richard Steele. That she had unusual graces both of mind and person, so to have fascinated a man like her husband, may well be assumed; but here we may also see something of the defects and demerits that accompanied them. She seems to have been thrifty and prudent of everything that told against him (as in keeping every scrap of his letters), but by no means remarkably so in other respects. Clearly also, she gave herself the most capricious and prudish airs; and quite astonishing is the success with which she appears to have exacted of him, not only an amount of personal devotion unusual in an age much the reverse of

chivalrous, but accounts the most minute of all he might be doing in her absence. He thinks it hard, he says in one letter, that because she is handsome she will not behave herself with the obedience that people of worse features do, but that he must be continually giving her an account of every trifle and minute of his time; yet he does it nevertheless. In subjoining some illustrations on this point from their first year of marriage, let us not fail to observe how characteristically the world has treated such a record. If Mr. Steele's general intercourse with his wife had been in keeping with the customary habits of the age, he would have had no need to make excuses or apologies of any kind; yet these very excuses, an exception that should prove the rule, are in his case taken as a rule to prove against him the exception.

He meets a schoolfellow from India, and he has to write to the dearest being on earth to pardon him if she does not see him till eleven o'clock. He has to dine at the gentlemen-ushers' table at Court, and he sends his adorable ruler a messenger to bring him back her orders. He cannot possibly come home to dinner; and he writes to tell his dear dear wife that he cannot. He "lay last night "at Mr. Addison's," and he has to tell the dear creature the how and the why, and all about the papers they were preparing for the press. A friend stops him as he is going home, and carries him off to Will's, whereon he sends a messenger, at eleven at night, to tell her it is a Welsh acquaintance of hers, and that they are only drinking her health, and that he will be with her "within a pint of "wine." If, on another occasion, he has any fear of the time of his exact return, he sends a special despatch to tell her to go to bed. When any interesting news reaches him for his Gazette, he sends it off at once to her. From the midst of his proofs at the office, he is continually writing to her. When, at the close of a day of hard work, he has gone to dine with Addison at Sandy-end, he snatches a little time from eating while the others are busy at it at the table, to tell her he is "yours, yours,

" ever, ever." He sends her a letter for no other purpose than to tell his dear, dear Prue, that he is sincerely her fond husband. He has a touch of the gout, and exasperates it by coming down stairs to celebrate her first birthday since their wedding; but it is his comfort, he tells her mother, as he hobbles about on his crutches, to see his darling little wife dancing at the other end of the room.

When Lord Sunderland orders him to attend at council, he sends a special note to warn Prue of the uncertainty of his release. When, in May 1708, Mr. Addison is chosen member for Lostwithiel, and he is obliged, with some persons concerned, to go to him immediately, he has to write to acquaint her with that fact. He will write from the Secretary's office at seven in the evening, to tell her he hopes to be richer next day; and again he will write at half-past ten the same night, to assure her he is then going very soberly to bed, and that she shall be the last thing in his thoughts as he does so, as well as the first next morning. Next morning he tells her she was not, he is sure, so soon awake as he was for her; desiring upon her the blessing of God. He writes to her as many letters in one day as there are posts, or stage-coaches, to Hampton-court; and then he gets Jervas the painter to fling another letter for her over their garden-wall, on passing there at night to his own house. He lets her visit his Gazette office, nay, is glad of visits at such a place, he tells her, from so agreeable a person as herself; and when her gay dress comes fluttering in, and with it "the beautifulest object his eyes can rest upon," he forgets all his troubles. And if charming words could enrich what they accompanied, of priceless value must have been the guineas, the five guineas, the two guineas, the ten shillings, the five shillings, they commended to her. He has none of Sir Bashful Constant's scruples in confessing that he is in love with his wife. His life is bound up with her; he values nothing truly but as she is its partaker; he is but what she makes him; with the strictest fidelity and love, with the utmost kindness and

duty, with every dictate of his affections, with every pulse of his heart, he is her passionate adorer, her enamoured husband. To which the measure of *her* return, in words at least, may perhaps be taken from the fact, that he has more than once to ask her to "write him word" that she shall really be overjoyed when they meet.

The tone of her letters is indeed often a matter of complaint with him, and more often a theme for loving banter and pleasant raillery. What does her dissatisfaction amount to, he asks her on one occasion, but that she has a husband who loves her better than his life, and who has a great deal of troublesome business out of the pain of which he removes the dearest thing alive? Her manner of writing, he says to her on some similar provocation, might to another look like neglect and want of love; but *he* will not understand it so, for he takes it only to be the uneasiness of a doating fondness which cannot bear his absence without disdain. She may think what she pleases, again he tells her, but she knows she has the best husband in the world. On a particular letter filled with her caprices reaching him, he says of course he must take his portion as it runs without repining, for he considers that good nature, added to the beautiful form God had given her, would make a happiness too great for human life. But, be it lightly or gravely expressed, the feeling in which all these little strifes and contentions close, on his part, still is that there are not words to express the tenderness he has for her; that *love* is too harsh a word; that if she knew how his heart aches when she speaks an unkind word to him, and springs with joy when she smiles upon him, he is sure she would be more eager to make him happy like a good wife, than to torment him like a peevish beauty.

Nevertheless there are differences, more rare, which the peevish beauty *will* push into positive quarrels; and from these his kind heart suffers much. The first we trace some eight months after the marriage (we limit all our present illustrations, we should remark, to the first year

and a half of their wedded life), when we find him trying to court her into good humour after it, and protesting that two or three more such differences will despatch him quite. On another occasion he knows not, he says, what she would have him do; but all that his fortune will compass he promises that she shall always enjoy, and have nobody near her that she does not like, unless haply he should himself be disapproved for being so devotedly her obedient husband. At yet another time he tells her he shall make it the business of his life to make her easy and happy; and he is sure her cool thoughts will tell her that it is a woman's glory to be her husband's friend and companion, and not his sovereign director. On the day following this he takes a higher tone. She has saucily told him that their little dispute has been far from a trouble to her, to which he gravely replies, that to him it has been the greatest affliction imaginable: and since she has twitted him with the judgment of the world, his answer must be, that he shall never govern his actions by it, but by the rules of morality and right reason; and so he will have her understand, that, though he loves her better than the light of his eyes, or the life-blood in his heart, yet he will not have his time or his will, on which her interests as well as his depend, under any direction but his own. Upon this a great explosion appears to have followed; and almost the only fragment we possess of her writing is a confession of error consequent upon it, which so far is curiously characteristic of what we believe her nature to have been, that while, in language which may somewhat explain the secret of her fascination over him, it gives even touching expression to her love and her contrition, it yet also contrives, in the very act of penitence, to plant another thorn. She begs his pardon if she has offended him, and she prays God to forgive him for adding to the sorrow of a heavy heart, which is above all sorrow but for his sake. This he is content to put aside by a very fervent assurance that there is not that thing on earth, except his honour, and that dignity which every

man who lives in the world must preserve to himself, which he is not ready to sacrifice to her will and inclination; and then he pleasantly closes by telling her that he had been dining the day before with Lord Halifax, when they had drank to the "beauties in the garden." The beauties in the garden were Prue and an old schoolfellow then on a visit to her.

And of the wits who so drank to her at Lord Halifax's, Swift was doubtless one. For this was the time when what he afterwards sneeringly called that nobleman's "good words and good dinners" were most abundant, and when Anthony Henley put together, as the very type of unexceptionable Whig company, "Mr. Swift, Lord Halifax, "Mr. Addison, Mr. Congreve, and the Gazetteer." Never was Swift so intimate as now with Steele and Addison. We have him dining with Steele at the George, when Addison entertains; with Addison at the Fountain, when Steele entertains; and with both at the St. James's, when Wortley Montague is the host. And no wonder the run upon him was great at the time, for he had lately started that wonderful joke against Partridge in which the rest of the wits joined so eagerly, and which not only kept the town in fits of laughter for a great many months, but was turned to a memorable use by Steele. In ridicule of the notorious almanac-maker, and all kindred impostors, Swift devised sundry Predictions after their own manner for the year 1708, the very first of which announced nothing less than the death of Partridge himself, which event, after extremely cautious consultation with the star of his nativity, he fixed for the 29th of March, about eleven at night; and he was casting about for a whimsical name to give to the assumed other astrologer who was to publish this joke, when his eye caught a sign over a locksmith's house with Isaac Bickerstaff underneath. Out accordingly came Mr. Bickerstaff's predictions, followed very speedily by an account of the "accomplishment of the first of them upon "the 29th instant." What he most counted upon of course was, that Partridge should be such a fool as to take

the matter up gravely; and he was not disappointed. In a furious pamphlet, the old astrologer declared he was perfectly well, and they were knaves that reported it otherwise. Whereupon Mr. Bickerstaff retorted with a vindication more diverting than either of its predecessors; Rowe, Steele, Addison, and Prior, contributed to the entertainment in divers amusing ways; and Congreve, affecting to come to the rescue, described under Partridge's name the distresses and reproaches 'Squire Bickerstaff had exposed him to, insomuch that he could not leave his doors without somebody twitting him for sneaking about without paying his funeral expenses. And all this, heightened in comicality by its contrast with the downright rage of Partridge himself, who was continually advertising himself *not* dead, and by the fact that the Company of Stationers did actually proceed as if in earnest he were, so contributed to make Mr. Bickerstaff talked about far and wide, that Steele afterwards spoke with no exaggeration when he gave Swift the merit of having rendered the name famous through all parts of Europe, and of having raised it, by his inimitable spirit and humour, to as high a pitch of reputation as it could possibly arrive at.[1]

That prediction was to be falsified, and the name of Bickerstaff, even from Steele himself, was to receive additional glory: but not yet for a few months. The close of 1708 was a time of sore distress with Steele, aggravated by his wife's approaching confinement. An execution for rent was put into Bury-street, which unassisted he could not satisfy; and it has been surmised that Addison was

[1] He said this in that preface to the fourth collected volume of the *Tatler* in which (without naming him) he refers to Swift as a gentleman well known to possess a genius quite inimitable in its power of surrounding with pleasing ideas occasions altogether barren to the common run of invention. With characteristic candour he adds his personal obligations. "I must acknowledge also that at my "first entering upon this work, a cer- "tain uncommon way of thinking, and "a turn in conversation peculiar to that "agreeable gentleman, rendered his "company very advantageous to one "whose imagination was to be con- "tinually employed upon obvious and "common subjects, though at the "same time obliged to treat of them "in a new and unbeaten method."

the friend whom he describes as refusing him assistance. This, however, is not likely. Though he tells his wife, two days afterwards, that she is to be of good cheer, for he has found friendship among the lowest when disappointed by the highest, he far too eagerly connects with "her rival" Addison, in a letter of less than a week's later date, a suggestion which is at once to bring back happiness to them all, to point with any probability the former reproach as against him. Just at this time, on Wharton becoming Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Addison received the appointment of Secretary, and his instant suggestion was that Steele should put in his claim for the Under-Secretaryship which this would vacate. Through letters extending over some five or six weeks, it is obvious that the hope continues to sustain Steele, and that the friends are working together to that end. It is not extinguished even so late as Addison's farewell supper; where he "treats" before his departure, and Steele helps him in doing the honours to his friends. But he is doomed to experience what Addison himself proved during the reverses of some twelve months later, that "the most likely way to get a "place is to appear not to want it;"[1] and three weeks after the supper he writes to a friend that his hopes for the Under-Secretaryship are at an end, but he believes "some-"thing additional" is to be given to him. After a few weeks more, his daughter Elizabeth is born; and, according to a memorandum in the writing of Prue, "her god-"mothers were my mother and Mrs. Vaughan, her god-"fathers Mr. Wortley Montague and Mr Addison."

Then, not many weeks after the Irish Secretary's departure, occurred that incident, which, little as Steele was conscious of it at the time, concerned him far more than all the state dignities or worldly advantages his great friends could give or take away. On Tuesday the 12th of April 1709,

[1] This expression is in one of Addison's letters, hitherto unpublished, of which a collection has been submitted to us, for the purposes of this paper, by the courtesy of Mr. Bohn, in whose complete edition of Addison's works, prepared for his Standard Library, they are designed to appear.

Steele published, as the first of the Lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, the first number of the *Tatler;* which he continued to issue unintermittedly, every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, until Tuesday the 2nd of January 1710-11. It does not appear that any one was in his secret, unless perhaps Swift; who was still lingering in London, with whom he was in constant communication (all Swift's letters and packets being addressed to him at his Gazette office, for the friend's privilege of so getting them free of postage),[1] and with whom he may probably have advised before using Mr. Bickerstaff's name. Addison, whose later connexion with it became so memorable, was certainly not consulted at first, and did not even recognise his friend's hand until some numbers had appeared. The first four were given to the newsmen for distribution gratis, and afterwards the price charged was a penny. The early and large demand from the country does not seem to have been expected; for it was not till after the 26th number that a threehalfpenny edition was regularly published with a blank half-sheet for transmission by post. Steele himself appears modestly to have thought, if Spence reports him accurately, that the combination with its more original matter of its little articles of news,

[1] An important privilege in those days, and one which Steele would fain have been able to exert on behalf of his friend Mr. Bickerstaff. As it was, Isaac was obliged to insist upon his correspondents paying for the carriage of the letters they sent. The postage of a single letter to any place not exceeding eighty miles, was then but 2*d*, and a double letter, 4*d*. But in the next session of parliament, the postage to the same distance was advanced to 3*d* and 6*d* (where it stood for upwards of half a century, when it was still further advanced); and of course the charge was considerably more for greater distances. In the notes to his excellent edition of the *Tatler*, Mr. Nichols discusses how far Mr. Bickerstaff exacted prepayment from his correspondents, and how far he dispensed with it; but the truth appears to have been, as was most natural, that the mere occasional contributors were required to pay (this is clear from an advertisement subjoined to the *Tatler* No. 186, in its original form), and that payment was not expected in the case of Mr. Bickerstaff's coadjutors and principal friends. At the close of No. 117, in the original form, he gives his thanks and humble service for a parcel of letters value ten shillings, of which it is added that the next subsequent letter would be one; and this leaves no doubt that the packet was one of those precious ones from Ireland containing not merely Mr. Eustace Budgell's handywork, but Addison's and Swift's.

to which of course his official position imparted unusual authority, first gave it the wings that carried it so far; but after what we have shown of its other attractions at the very outset, this explanation will hardly be required. The causes too, as well as the extent, of its popularity, have been pointed out by a then living authority quite unexceptionable.

Gay was a young man just entering on the town when the *Tatler* was quitting it, and, already with strong Tory leanings, he wrote to a friend in the country shortly after the appearance of the last number, that its sudden cessation was bewailed as some general calamity, and that by it the coffee-houses had lost more customers than they could hope to retain by all their other newspapers put together. He adds that the author's reputation had really arisen to a greater height than he believed any living author's ever was before him; and he proceeds to account for it by the fact that, whereas other polite writers endeavoured to please the age by falling in with its vices, and it would have been "a jest some time since for a man to assert "that anything witty could be said in praise of a married "state, or that devotion and virtue were any way necessary "to the character of a fine gentleman," Mr. Bickerstaff, on the other hand, had the courage to tell the town that they were a parcel of fops, fools, and vain coquettes; and the genius to tell it in such a manner as even pleased them, and made them more than half inclined to believe it. And who, continues Gay, remembering the thousand follies his little paper had either banished or given check to, how much it had contributed to virtue and religion, how many it had rendered happy by merely showing it was their own fault if they were not so, and to what extent it had impressed upon the indifferent the graces and advantages of letters, who shall wonder that Mr. Bickerstaff, apart from his standing with the wits, should at the morning tea-tables and evening assemblies have become of all guests the most welcome? that the very merchants on 'Change should have relished and caressed

him? and that the bankers in Lombard-street, not less than the ladies at Court, were now verily persuaded "that Captain Steele is the greatest scholar and best "casuist of any man in England?"

One bitter drop there was, nevertheless, in the cup thus overflowing. Even the Tories, says Gay, "in respect to "his other good qualities, had almost forgiven his "unaccountable imprudence in declaring against them." There is much virtue in an *almost*. Here it means that Steele would certainly have been forgiven his first unaccountable imprudence, if he had not gone on committing a vast many more.

The *Tatler* had not been half a year in existence when uneasy symptoms of weakness had broken out among the Ministry. In the autumn Addison returned to London, and the first result of the conference of the friends was a letter from Steele to Swift, who remained in Ireland. It enclosed a letter from Lord Halifax. It also told Swift that no man could have said more in praise of another than Addison had said last Wednesday in praise of him at Lord Halifax's dinner-table. It assured him that among powerful men no opportunity was now omitted to upbraid the Ministry for his stay in Ireland, and that there was but one opinion among the company at the dinner in question, which included Lord Edward Russell, Lord Essex, Mr. Maynwaring, Mr. Addison, and himself. Finally, it wonders that Swift does not oftener write to him, reminds him of the town's eagerness to listen to the real Mr. Bickerstaff, and tells him how his substitute longs to usher him and his into the world. "Not that there can be anything added by me "to your fame," says the good-hearted writer, "but to "walk bare-headed before you." In this letter may be read the anxiety of the Whigs, conceived too late, as so many of their good purposes have been, to secure the services of Jonathan Swift. The reply was a first-rate Tatler,[1] but nothing satisfactory in regard to the Whigs.

[1] I have said in a previous paper that Swift's tone jars now and then upon the mirth of his friends as having something too much of condescension in it, but

Soon after broke out the Sacheverell trial, and with it the opportunity Harley had planned and waited for. He saw the Whig game was up, and that he had only to present himself and claim the spoil. Steele saw it too, and made vain attempts in the *Tatler* to turn the popular current. The promise made him before Addison's first departure for Dublin was now redeemed; and a Commissionership of Stamps testified, tardily enough, the Whig sense of the services he was rendering, and the risks he was running, in their behalf. From all sides poured in upon him, at the same time, warnings which he bravely disregarded. From Ireland, under the name of Aminadab, he was prudently counselled to consider what a day might bring forth, and to "think of that as he took tobacco;" nor could he, in accordance with such advice, have taken many whiffs, when Swift followed his letter. By the time he arrived in London, at the close of August 1710, the Whig overthrow was complete; Harley and St. John were in power; his friend Prior, who had gone over to them and was expelled from the Kit-Katt, was abusing his old associate Steele in a new paper called the *Examiner;* and the first piece of interesting news he had to write to Stella was, that Steele would certainly lose his place of Gazetteer. This was after an evening (the 10th of Sep-

the humour of all his contributions to the *Tatler* is of the most rare and exquisite kind. Generally of course he wrote as a correspondent; but occasionally Steele surrendered Mr. Bickerstaff's chair to him, and observe how slily he can use it to have a friendly laugh at everybody concerned. "No man," he begins (No. 67) "can "conceive, until he comes to try it, "how great a pain it is to be a public-"spirited person. I am sure I am "unable to express to the world "what great anxiety I have suffered, "to see of how little benefit my Lucu-"brations have been to my fellow-"subjects. Men will go on in their "own way, in spite of all my labour. "I gave Mr. Didapper a private re-"primand for wearing red-heeled "shoes, and at the same time was so "indulgent as to connive at him for "fourteen days, because I would give "him the wearing of them out; but, "after all this, I am informed he "appeared yesterday with a new pair "of the same sort. I have no better "success with Mr. What-D'ye-call, "as to his buttons; Stentor still "roars; and box and dice rattle as "loud as they did before I writ "against them. Partridge walks "about at noon-day, and Æsculapius "thinks of adding a new lace to his "livery. However, *I* must still go "on in laying these enormities before "men's eyes, and let *them* answer for "going on in their practice."

tember) passed in company with him and Addison. They met again, at the dinner-table of Lord Halifax, on the 1st of October, when Swift refused to pledge with them the resurrection, unless they would add the reformation, of the Whigs; but he omitted to mention that on that very day he had been busy lampooning the ex-whig-premier. Three days after he was dining with Harley, having cast his fortunes finally against his old friends; and before the same month was closed, the Gazette had been taken from Steele.

Yet Swift affects to feel some surprise that, on going to Addison a few days later to talk over Steele's prospects, and offer his good services with Harley, Addison should have "talked as if he suspected me," and refused to fall in with anything proposed. More strangely still, he complains to Stella the next day that he has never had an invitation to Steele's house since he came over from Ireland, and that during this visit he has not even seen his wife, "by whom he is governed most abominably. So "what care I for his wit?" he adds; "for he is the worst "company in the world till he has a bottle of wine in his "head." Nevertheless he shows still a strange hankering after both the friends, and not so much indifference as might be supposed to the worst of company: for the next social glimpse we have of him is at our old acquaintance Elliott's, of the St. James's, where the coffeeman has a christening, at which as Vicar of Laracor he officiates; and where "the rogue" had a most noble supper, and Steele and himself sat among some scurvy people over a bowl of punch, until very late indeed. But in truth one has not much difficulty, through any apparent discordancy of statement, in discovering exactly enough in what position recent events had now placed the two friends towards him. On their side, without further faith in his political profession, remained still the same respect for his genius, and still the same desire to have help from his wit; and on his, underlying a real desire to be of service where he could, was displayed too much of a fussy exhibition of his eagerness to serve, and far too exuberant and exulting a sense

of that sudden and unwonted favour at Whitehall which seemed half to have turned the great brain that had condescendingly waited for it so long. At his intercession, Harley was to see Steele; but the ex-Gazetteer did not even keep the appointment which was to save him his Commissionership. He probably knew better than Swift that Harley had no present intention to remove him. The new Lord Treasurer certainly less surprised his antagonist Steele than his friend Jonathan, by showing no more resentment than was implied in the request that the latter should not give any more help to the *Tatler*. "They hate to think that I should help him," he wrote to Stella, "and so I frankly told them I would do it no more."

Already Steele had taken the determination, however, which made this resolve, in so far as the *Tatler* was concerned, of the least possible importance to him. His loss of the Gazette had entailed a change in the conduct of his paper, which had convinced him of the expediency of re-casting it on a new plan. The town was startled by the announcement, therefore, that the Tatler of the 2nd January, 1710-11, was to be the last; and Swift informs us that Addison, whom he met that night at supper, was as much surprised as himself at the announcement, and quite as little prepared for it. But this may only express the limit of the confidence now reposed in Swift; for there can be little doubt that the friends had acted together in what already was in agitation to replace the *Tatler*. Nor is there any ground to suppose that Addison was ignorant, or Swift informed, of an interview which Steele had with Harley in the interval before the new design was matured. The Lord Treasurer's weakness was certainly not a contempt or disregard for letters, and, though the object of the meeting was to settle a kind of armed neutrality, he overpassed it so far as to intimate the wish not simply to retain Steele in the Commissionership, but to give him something more valuable.[1] This

[1] "When I had the honour of a "short conversation with you, you "were pleased not only to signify to "me that I should remain in this

was civilly declined, but the courtesy was not forgotten; and the better feeling it promoted for a time, the sort of armistice it established, the understood abstinence from present hostility involved in it, obtained all the more zealous help from Addison to his friend's new scheme. On Thursday the 1st of March, 1710-11, appeared the first number of the *Spectator*, with an announcement that it was to be continued daily. Much wonder was raised by so bold a promise, and little hope entertained that it could ever be redeemed. The result showed, nevertheless, with what well-grounded confidence the friends had embarked in an enterprise which men of less rich resource thought extravagant and impossible. From day to day, without a single intermission, the *Spectator* was continued through 555 numbers, up to the 6th of December 1712. It began with a regular design, which with unflagging spirit was kept up to its close. "It "certainly is very pretty," wrote Swift to Stella, after some dozen numbers had appeared; when, in answer to her question, he had to tell her that it was written by Steele with Addison's help. "Mr. Steele seems to have gathered "new life," he added, "and to have a new fund of wit."

So indeed it might have seemed. Never had he shown greater freshness and invention than in his first sketches of the characters that were to give life to the new design: nor can any higher thing be said of his conception of Sir Roger de Coverley and Will Honeycomb, than that it deserved the noble elaboratation of Addison; or of his humourous touches to the short-faced gentleman,[1] than that even Addison's invention was enriched by them. It

"office, but to add that, if I would "name to you one of more value, "which would be more commodious "to me, you would favour me in it... "I thank your Lordship for the regard "and distinction which you have at "sundry times showed me." So Steele wrote to Harley (then Lord Oxford) on resigning his Commissionership a little more than two years after the date in the text, when the *Spectator* had been brought to a close, and his tacit compact with Addison was at an end.

[1] We can give only one out of many masterly strokes; but, in the whole range of Addison's wit, is there anything more perfect than Steele's making the *Spectator* remember that he was once taken up for a Jesuit, for no other reason than his profound taciturnity?

is not our purpose here to compare or criticise what each, according to his genius, contributed. It is enough to say that to the last both nobly bore their part, and that whatever we have seen in the *Tatler* of Steele's wit, pathos, and philosophy, reappeared with new graces in the *Spectator*.[1] There was the same inexpressible charm in the matter, the same inexhaustible variety in the form. And upon all the keen exposure of vice, or the pleasant laugh at folly; as prominent in the lifelike little story, as in the criticism of an actor or a play; making attractive the gravest themes to the unthinking, and recommending the lightest fancies to the most grave; there was still the old and ineffaceable impress of good-nature and humanity —the soul of a sincere man shining out through it all. Let any one read the uninterrupted series of twenty-two Spectators, which Steele daily contributed from the 6th to the 31st of August 1711, and doubt his title to a full share in the glory and fame of the enterprise. Try his claim to participate in its wit and character by such

[1] It may perhaps be worth subjoining, before we quit the subject of their pleasant and ever memorable literary companionship, that what has been said at various times of Addison's care and Steele's indifference in regard to corrections of the press, seems to express not badly the different temperaments of the men. Joseph Warton had heard of Addison's being so nice that he would even stop the press when nearly the whole impression of the *Spectator* was printed, to insert a new preposition or conjunction. Nor does this differ from Pope's report that Addison wrote very fluently, but was very scrupulous and slow in correction: to which he adds, what no doubt Steele knew and acted on, that "it seemed to be for "his advantage not to have time for "much revisal." That, during the continuance of the works in which they were jointly engaged, Steele sent all papers to press, is certain. Tickell asserts that the papers, before publication, were never or seldom shown to each other by their respective writers; but that all passed through Steele's hands to the printer, is proved by old Richard Nutt, who worked in his father's office, Morphew's partner, John Nutt. This same Richard also told Mr. Nichols that the press was stopped, not seldom, by want of copy, for which Steele was responsible; and that in these cases he had often a hard task to find out Steele, who frequently wrote hastily what was needed, in a room at the printing-office. "This merry old man, who "died but lately, mentioned upon "recollection a particular paper "which he saw rapidly written by "Steele at midnight, and in bed, "whilst he waited to carry it to the "press." Let me simply add that the art of making *errata* in themselves delightful, and of turning the correction of a printer's error into a new spring and charm of wit, was never carried to such a perfection as by Addison.

papers as the short-faced gentleman's experiences (No. 4); as the seven he inserted in the series of Sir Roger de Coverley; as those numerous sketches of Clubs which his touch filled with such various life; and as the essays we now proceed to name. On Powell's Puppet-Show (No. 14), On Ordinary People (No. 17), On Envious People (No. 19), On Over-consciousness and Affectation (No. 38), On Coffee-house Politicians (No. 49), On Court Mournings (No. 64), On the Fine Gentlemen of the Stage (No. 65), On Coarse Speaking (No. 75), On the Improvidence of Jack Truepenny (No. 82), On the Footmen of the House of Peers (No. 88), On the Portable Quality of Good Humour (No. 100), On Servants' Letters (No. 137), On the Man of Wit and Pleasure (No. 151), On the Virtues of Self-denial (No. 206 and No. 248), On Mr. Antony Freeman's domestic troubles, and on Mr. Tom Meggott's share therein (Nos. 212 and 216), in which lies the whole germ of the capital comedy of the *Jealous Wife*, On Generous Men (No. 346), On Witty Companions (No. 258), On the Comic Actors (No. 370), On Jack Sippet (No. 448), and On Various Forms of Anger (No. 438), with its whimsical contrasts of imperturbability and wrath. Let him be measured, too, in graver themes, by such papers as those On Living to our own Satisfaction (No. 27), On Female Education (No. 66), On the Death of a Friend (No. 133), On the Fear of Death (No. 152), On Youth and Age (No. 153), On the Flogging at Public Schools (No. 157), On Raffaelle's Cartoons (No. 226), and On the Death of the Comedian Eastcourt (No. 468), the last one of his most characteristic, wise, and beautiful pieces of writing.[1] So long as these and many

[1] I subjoin a passage never to be quoted too often, from this exquisite essay, in which, describing Eastcourt's astonishing talents for mimicry, he extracts from them a philosophy of most wise and general application to the weakness and self-love of us all. "What was" he says "peculiarly "excellent in this memorable com- "panion, was, that in the accounts "he gave of persons and sentiments, "he did not only hit the figure of "their faces, and manner of their "gestures, but he would in his narra- "tive fall into their very way of "thinking, and this when he re- "counted passages wherein men of "the best wit were concerned, as

others survive, there will be no need to strike him apart, or judge him aloof, from his friend.

Nothing in England had ever equalled the success of the *Spectator*. It sold, in numbers and volumes, to an extent almost fabulous in those days; and when Bolingbroke's stamp carried Grub-street by storm, it was the solitary survivor of that famous siege. Doubling its price, it yet fairly held its ground, and at its close was not only paying Government 29*l* a week on account of the halfpenny stamp upon the numbers sold, but had a circulation in volumes of nearly ten thousand. Altogether it must often have circulated, before the stamp, thirty thousand, which might be multiplied by six to give a corresponding popularity in our day. Nevertheless Steele had been for some time uneasy and restless. Thus far, with reasonable fidelity, the armistice on his side had been kept; but from day to day, at what he believed to be the thickening of a plot against public liberty, he found it more and more difficult to observe the due restraints; and not seldom latterly, perhaps in spite of himself, his thoughts took the

"well as such wherein were repre-
"sented men of the lowest rank of
"understanding. It is certainly as
"great an instance of self-love to a
"weakness, to be impatient of being
"mimick'd, as any can be imagined.
"There were none but the vain, the
"formal, the proud, or those who
"were incapable of amending their
"faults, that dreaded him; to others
"he was in the highest degree pleas-
"ing; and I do not know any satis-
"faction of any indifferent kind I
"ever tasted so much, as having got
"over an impatience of my seeing
"myself in the air he could put me
"when I have displeased him. It is,
"indeed, to his exquisite talent this
"way, more than any philosophy I
"could read on the subject, that my
"person is very little of my care;
"and it is indifferent to me what is
"said of my shape, my air, my man-
"ner, my speech, or my address. It
"is to poor Eastcourt I chiefly owe
"that I am arrived at the happiness
"of thinking nothing a diminution
"to me, but what argues a depravity
"of my will . . . I have been present
"with him among men of the most
"delicate taste a whole night, and
"have known him (for he saw it was
"desired) keep the discourse to himself
"the most part of it, and maintain
"his good humour with a counte-
"nance, in a language so delightful,
"without offence to any person or
"thing upon earth, still preserving
"the distance his circumstances
"obliged him to;—I say, I have seen
"him do all this in such a charming
"manner, that I am sure none of
"those I hint at will read this, with-
"out giving him some sorrow for
"their abundant mirth, and one gush
"of tears for so many bursts of
"laughter. I wish it were any
"honour to the pleasant creature's
"memory, that my eyes are too much
"suffused to let me go on —".

direction of politics. "He has been mighty impertinent "of late in his Spectators," wrote Swift to Stella, "and "I believe he will very soon lose his employment." That was, to Steele, the last and least thing at present. What he wanted was a certain freedom for himself which hardly consisted with the plan of the *Spectator*, and he therefore resolved to substitute an entirely new set of characters. He closed it in December 1712, and he announced a new daily paper, called the *Guardian*, for the following March.

Into this new paper, to which Addison (engaged in preparing *Cato* for the stage) did not for a considerable time contribute, he carried the services of the young poet whose surprising genius was now the talk of the town. Steele had recognised at once Pope's surpassing merit, and in his friendly critic Pope welcomed a congenial friend. He submitted verses to him, altered them to his pleasure, wrote a poem at his request, and protested himself more eager to be called his little friend, Dick Distich, than to be complimented with the title of a great genius or an eminent hand.[1] He was so recreated, in short, as he afterwards wrote to Addison, with "the "brisk sallies and quick turns of wit which Mr. Steele "in his liveliest and freest humours darts about him," that he did not immediately foresee the consequence of engaging with so ardent a politician. Accordingly, just as Swift broke out into open quarrel with his old associate, we find Pope confessing that many honest Jacobites were taking it very ill of him that he continued to write with Steele.

The dispute with Swift need not detain us. It is enough if we use it to show Steele's spirit as a gentleman, who could not retort an injustice, or fight wrong with

[1] An ingenious friend of mine has lately gone far (in *Athenæum* and *Notes and Queries*) to prove that the various letters in Pope's Correspondence professing to have been interchanged between himself and Steele at this time, and on which the statement in the text is based, only assumed their existing shape in later years, when it suited Pope's purpose so to place them before the world. But that the truth generally is expressed in those letters, however open to particular correction as to dates and occasions, I entertain no doubt whatever.

wrong. When, after a very few months, he stood up in the House of Commons to justify himself from libels which had exhausted the language of scurrility in heaping insult upon him and his, the only personal remark he made was to quote a handsome tribute he had formerly offered to their writer, with this manly addition: "The gentleman "I here intended was Dr. Swift. This kind of man I "thought him at that time: we have not met of late, but "I hope he deserves this character still." And why was he thus tender of Swift? He avowed the reason in the last paper of the *Englishman*, where he says that he knew his old friend's sensibility of reproach to be such that he would be unable to bear life itself under half the ill language he had given others. Swift himself had formerly described to him those early days when he possessed the sensitive fear of libel to an extraordinary degree, and this had not been forgotten by his generous adversary.

But what really was at issue in their quarrel ought to be stated, since it forms the point of departure taken by Steele, not simply from those who differed but from many who agreed with him in politics. "Principles are out of "the case," said Swift, "we dispute wholly about per- "sons." "No," rejoined Steele, "the dispute is not "about persons and parties, but things and causes." Such had been the daring conduct of the men in power, and such their insolent success, that Steele, at a time when few had the courage to speak out, did not scruple to declare what he believed to be their ultimate design. "Nothing," he wrote to his wife some few months after the present date, "nothing but Divine Providence can "prevent a Civil War within a few years." Swift laughed, and said Steele's head had been turned by the success of his papers, and that he thought himself mightily more important than he really was. This may have been so; but whatever imaginary value he gave himself he was at least ready to risk, for the supposed duty he thought also incumbent on him. Nor was it little for him, in his position at that time, to surrender literature for politics; to resign his

Commissionership of Stamps; and to enter the House of Commons. He did not require Pope to point him out lamentingly to Congreve, as a great instance of the fate of all who are so carried away, with the risk of being not only punished by the other party but of suffering from their own. Even from the warning of Addison, that his zeal for the public might be ruinous to himself, he had turned silently aside. Not a day now passed that the most violent scurrilities were not directed against his pen and person, in which one of Swift's "under-writers," Wagstaff, made himself conspicuous; and Colley Cibber laughs at the way in which these scribes were already labouring to transfer to his friend Addison the credit of all his Tatlers and Spectators. Nevertheless he went steadily on. "It is not for me," he remarked with much dignity, "to say how I write or speak, but it is for me to say I do "both honestly; and when I threw away some fame for "letters and politeness, to serve the nobler ends of justice "and government, I did not do it with a design to be as "negligent of what should be said of me with relation to "my integrity. No, wit and humour are the dress and "ornament of the mind; but honesty and truth are the "soul itself." We may, or may not, think Steele discreet in the choice he made; but of his sincerity and disinterestedness there ought to be no doubt whatever.

When at last, upon the publication of his *Crisis*, which was but the sequel to those papers in the *Guardian* that led to his election for Stockbridge, the motion was made to expel him for having "maliciously insinuated that the "Protestant succession in the House of Hanover is in "danger under her Majesty's administration," the Whigs rallied to his support with what strength they could. Robert Walpole and General Stanhope took their place on either side of him as he waited at the bar, and Addison prompted him throughout his spirited and temperate defence. He spoke, says one who heard him, for near three hours, with such temper, eloquence, and unconcern, as gave entire satisfaction to all who were not prepossessed

against him. But perhaps the most interesting occurrence of that memorable day was the speech of Lord Finch. This young nobleman, afterwards famous as a minister and orator, owed gratitude to Steele for having repelled in the *Guardian* a libel on his sister, and he rose to make his maiden speech in defence of her defender. But bashfulness overcame him, and after a few confused sentences he sat down, crying out as he did so, "It is "strange I cannot speak for this man, though I could "readily fight for him!" Upon this, such cheering rang through the house, that suddenly the young lord took heart, rose again, and made the first of a long series of telling and able speeches. Of course, however, it did not save Steele, who was expelled by a majority of nearly a hundred in a house of four hundred members.

It was a short-lived triumph, we need hardly say. Soon came the blow which struck down that tyrant majority, dispersed its treason into air, consigned Oxford to the Tower, and drove Bolingbroke into exile. Eagerly Steele wrote to his wife from the St. James's coffeehouse, on the 31st of July 1714, that the Queen was dead. It was a mistake, but she died next day. Three days later he writes from the Thatched-house, St. James's, that he has been loaded with compliments by the Regents, and assured of something immediately. Yet it was but little he obtained. He received a place in the household (surveyorship of the royal stables); was placed in the commission of peace for Middlesex; and, on subsequently going up with an address from that county, was knighted. A little before he became Sir Richard, however, the member for Truro resigned the supervision of the Theatre Royal (then a government office, entitling to a share in the patent, and worth seven or eight hundred a year), and the players so earnestly petitioned for Steele as his successor, that he was named to the office. "His spirits "took such a lively turn upon it," says Cibber, "that, "had we been all his own sons, no unexpected act of filial "duty could have more endeared us to him." Whatever the

coldness elsewhere might be, here, at any rate, was warmth enough. Benefits past were not benefits forgot, with those lively good-natured men. They remembered, as Cibber tells us, when a criticism in the *Tatler* used to fill their theatre at a time when nothing else could; and they knew that not a comedian among them[1] but owed something to Richard Steele, whose good nature on one occasion had even consented that Doggett should announce the Tatler as intending to be bodily present at his benefit, and had permitted him to dress a fictitious Isaac Bickerstaff at himself for amusement of the crowded house.[2]

The politicians Steele certainly found less mindful of the past than the players. But if we show that the course he took in the prosperous days of Whiggism differed in no respect from that which he had taken in its adverse days, some excuse may perhaps suggest itself for the dispensers of patronage and office. He entered Parliament for Boroughbridge, the Duke of Newcastle having given him his interest there; and for some time, and with some success as a speaker, he took part in the debates. To judge from his criticism on orators, one might suppose himself to have been a proficient in the art, and he was doubtless more

[1] I have spoken of this already, but I may here add that the most humble, as well as the highest, obtained his good word; and it would be difficult to give a better instance, in a few lines, at once of his kindness and his genius as a critic of players, than by what he says of a small actor of Betterton's time: "Mr. William Peer "distinguished himself particularly "in two characters, which no man "ever could touch but himself. One "of them was the speaker of the pro- "logue to the play which is con- "trived in the tragedy of Hamlet, to "awake the conscience of the guilty "princess. Mr. William Peer spoke "that preface to the play with such "an air as represented that he was "an actor; and with such an inferior "manner as only acting an actor, "that the others on the stage were "made to appear real great persons, "and not representatives. This was "a nicety in acting that none but the "most subtle player could so much "as conceive."

[2] This was on Monday the 16th of January 1709-10, Mr. Bickerstaff having gravely promised in Saturday's Tatler, in reply to a letter from Doggett saying it would bring him the greatest house since the visit of the Morocco ambassador, that he'd come in between the first and second act of *Love for Love* (pleased at his choice, he told him, of so excellent a play, and looking on him as the best of comedians), and would remain in the R. H. box over the pit until the end of the fourth act. The applause at the fictitious Isaac's appearance was tremendous.

than an average speaker. He knew how to avoid, at any rate, what he points out as a great error committed by the speakers of his day in confounding oratory with passion, and thinking the *si vis me flere* as applicable in the one as in the other case. If any man would exert an uncontrolled influence over those who listen to him, said Steele, never let him lose control over himself. This was no great period for oratory, however. No successor had yet appeared to Henry St. John in the Commons, nor even to Robert Harley. Steele wittily described the House at the time as consisting very much of silent people oppressed by the choice of a great deal to say, and of eloquent people ignorant that what they said was nothing to the purpose; and as it was, he tells us, his own ambition to speak only what he thought, so it was his weakness to think such a course might have its use. Undoubtedly such a course he did absolutely take; nor does he at any time seem, out of deference to party or its prejudices, to have compromised a single opinion sincerely entertained by him.

He attacked every attempt to give power to the Church independent of the State; he held that all eagerness in clergymen to grasp at exorbitant power was but popery in another form;[1] and he created much offence by declaring that, if Rome pretended to be infallible and England to be always in the right, he saw little difference between the two. In his prosperity Harley had no assailant more

[1] A further remark made by him in the course of this argument is well worth attention and reflection in the present day. "I am now brought," he says, "by the natural course of "such thoughts, to examine into the "conduct of Christians, and particu-"larly of Protestants of all sorts. "One thing drew on another: and, "as little conversant as I have here-"tofore been in such matters, I "quickly found that Christianity was "neither unintelligible, nor ill-na-"tured; that the Gospel does not "invade the rights of *mankind*, nor "invest any men with authority de-"structive to society; and (what "was the most melancholy part of "the whole) that Protestants" (he is speaking of the extreme High Church party) "must be reduced to the ab-"surdity of renouncing Protestant as "well as Christian Principles, before "they can pretend to make their prac-"tices and their professions consistent. "This I resolved to represent; and "have done it, without regard to "any one sort of them more than "another. I am more and more per-"suaded, every day, that it is fitting "to understand Religion, as well "as to praise it."

bitter, and in his adversity no more generous opponent, than Steele. "I transgressed, my lord, against you," he said, "when you could make twelve peers in a day; I "ask your pardon when you are a private nobleman." As he had fought the Schism bill under the Tories, under the Whigs he pleaded for toleration to the Roman Catholics. "I suppose this," he wrote to his wife, "gave a "handle to the fame of my being a Tory; but you may "perhaps by this time have heard that I am turned Pres- "byterian, for the same day, in a meeting of a hundred "parliament-men, I laboured as much for the Protestant "Dissenters." No man was so bitter against the Jacobites, as long as any chance of their success remained; but none so often or so successfully interceded on their behalf for mercy, when the day had gone against them. The mischief of the South Sea scheme was by Steele more than any man exposed; but for such of the directors as had themselves been its dupes, no man afterwards spoke so charitably. Walpole had befriended him most on the question of his expulsion, and he admired him more than any other politician; yet he alone in the House spoke against Walpole's proposition about the Debt, "because "he did not think the way of doing it just." Addison was the man he to the last admired the most, and, notwithstanding any recurring coolness or difference, loved the most on earth; but, on the question of Lord Sunderland's Peerage bill, he joined Walpole against Addison, and with tongue and pen so actively promoted the defeat of that mischievous measure, that we may even yet, on this score, hold ourselves to be his debtors.

To this rapid sketch of Steele's career as a politician, it might seem superfluous to add his complaint against those who neglected him, or that, when the Duke of Newcastle had been so mean as to punish his opposition to the Peerage bill by depriving him of his Drury-lane appointment (to which, we may interpose, he was restored as soon as Walpole returned to office), he should thus have written to Lady Steele: "I am talking to my wife,

" and therefore may speak my heart, and the vanity of it. " I know, and you are witness, that I have served the " Royal Family with an unreservedness due only to " Heaven; and I am now (I thank my brother Whigs) "'not possessed of twenty shillings from the favour of the " Court." But neither should we attempt to conceal that a man of a different temperament and more self-control would hardly at this time, after all the opportunities his own genius had opened to him, have needed the exercise, or have complained of the absence, of such " favour."

So it was, however, and we must take the man even as he was, subject to all the remarks which duller men in his own day, or greater men since, may have thought themselves entitled to make upon him. Such remarks do not then seem to have troubled him very much, and perhaps his reputation may survive them now. On the day after his speech in the House of Commons interceding for mercy to the South Sea directors, Mr. William Whiston, for whom also he had interceded formerly when in straits hardly less difficult, met him at Button's. " Why, Sir " Richard," said the worthy man, " they say you have been " making a speech in the House for the South Sea direc- " tors." " Well," said he quietly, " they do say so." To which Whiston, who confesses that he had been a little nettled personally some time before by a ludicrous remark of Sir Richard's, made the somewhat illogical reply, " Then " how does this agree with your former writing against the " scheme?" " Mr. Whiston," rejoined Steele, " you can " walk on foot, and I can not." Of course the dull man tells the anecdote by way of showing that Steele could change his opinions for his interest, but that is not the construction any well-informed reader will put upon it. To look after his own interest at any time was the very last thing Steele ever thought of doing; and as to the matter in question, it was notorious that in speaking for Lord Stanhope and the other misguided men, he discharged himself only of a debt of kindness that could have no effect, save such as might be unfavourable, upon

his own fortune. It was simply his wit and good breeding that politely had declined debate, and left Mr. Whiston in enjoyment of his own sordid fancy.

Very far indeed from such admission as any such fancy would father on him, that he owed to the ministers the coach he rode in, are those repeated complaints at this very time of the utter absence of all ministers' favours, which might more wisely perhaps, with a little dignity and self-denial, have been spared. This we have already said, though we will not say that the complaints were altogether unjust. The Whigs treated Steele badly. They never sufficiently remembered the actual service he had rendered them and their cause when actual danger was abroad. Nor was he without ample justification for the statement he left on record against them in his Apologue of the husbandman and the bridge, with which the subject may be left also in these pages. There was, he said, a certain husbandman in a certain kingdom, who lived in a certain place under a certain hill, near a certain bridge. This poor man was a little of a scholar, being given to country learning, such as astrological predictions of the weather, and the like; and one night, in one of those musings of his about his house, he saw a party of soldiers belonging to a prince in enmity with his own, coming towards the bridge. Off he immediately ran, and drew up that part which is called the draw-bridge. Then calling his family, and getting his cattle together, he put forward his plough, behind that his stools, and his chairs behind them; and by this means stopped the march till it was day-light, when all the neighbouring lords and gentlemen, being roused by this time and thoroughly waked from sleep, were able to see the enemy as well as he. Hereupon, with undoubted gallantry and spirit, they crowded on to oppose the foe, and in their zeal and hurry, pitching our poor husbandman over-bridge, and his goods after him, they most effectually kept out the invaders. And a great mercy was that accident, for it was nothing less than the safety of the kingdom. Therefore ought no one, pursues the author of the Apologue,

to be discomfited from the public service, by what had happened to this rustic. For though he was neglected at the present, and every man said he was an honest fellow and no one's enemy but his own in exposing his all, and though nobody said he was every one's friend but his own, still the man had ever after the liberty, the invaluable liberty and privilege, that he, and no other but he and his family, should beg on the bridge in all times following. And he is begging on the bridge accordingly to this very hour.

It is not our desire to extenuate the failings of Sir Richard Steele, the begging on the bridge included; nor have we sought to omit them from this picture of his career. But his claim to have had more liberal consideration is quite apart from the question of whether he would himself have been likely very greatly to profit by it. We much doubt if he would. His genius, and the means then open to it, would itself have sufficed for all his wants, if in a worldly sense he could have been more true to it. But it was unhappily of the very essence of his character that any present social impression took, so far, the place of all previous moral resolutions; and that, bitterly as he had often felt the "shot of accident and "the dart of chance," he still thought them carelessly to be brushed aside by the smiling face and heedless hand. No man's projects for fortune had so often failed, yet none were so often renewed. Indeed the very art of his genius told against him in his life; and that he could so readily disentangle his thoughts from what most gave them pain and uneasiness, and direct his sensibility at will to flow into many channels, had certainly not a tendency to favour the balance at his banker's. But such a man is no example of improvidence for others. Its ordinary warnings come within quite another class of cases; and, even in stating what is least to be commended in Steele, there is no need to omit what in his case will justify some exceptional consideration of it. At least we have the example of a bishop to quote, for as much good nature as we can spare.

Doctor Hoadly, the Bishop of Bangor, was a steady friend of Steele's, and consented ultimately to act as executor and guardian to his children. He accompanied him and Addison one day to a Whig celebration of King William's anniversary, and became rather grave to see the lengths at which the festivity threatened to arrive. In the midst of his misgivings, in came a humble but facetious Whig on his knees, with a tankard of ale in his hand; drank it off to the immortal memory; and then, still in his kneeling posture, managed to shuffle out. "Do laugh," whispered Steele to the bishop, next to whom he sat, "it's *humanity* "to laugh." For which humane episcopal exertion, carried to a yet higher tolerance in his own case at a later period of the evening, Steele sent him next morning this pleasant couplet,

> "Virtue with so much ease on Bangor sits,
> All faults he pardons, though he none commits."

In another humorous anecdote of this date, Hoadly was also an actor with Steele. They went together on a visit to Blenheim, and sat next each other at a private play got up for the amusement of the great Duke, now lapsing into his last illness; when, as they both observed how well a love-scene was acted by the Duke's aide-de-camp, Captain Fishe, "I doubt this fish is flesh, my Lord," whispered Steele. On going away, they had to pass through an army of laced coats and ruffles in the hall; and as the Bishop was preparing the usual fees, "I have not "enough," cried his companion, and much to the episcopal discomposure proceeded to address the footmen, told them he had been much struck by the good taste with which he had seen them applauding in the right places up stairs, and invited them all gratis to Drury-lane theatre, to whatever play they might like to bespeak.

At this date it was, too, that young Savage, for whom Wilks had produced a comedy at Drury-lane, was kindly noticed and greatly assisted by Steele, though all the stories of him that were afterwards told to Johnson by

his ill-fated friend only showed how sorely poor Sir Richard needed assistance himself. He surprised Savage one day by carrying him in his coach to a tavern, and dictating a pamphlet to him, which he was sent out into Grub-street to sell; when he found that Sir Richard had only retired for the day to avoid his creditors, and had composed the pamphlet to pay his reckoning. Johnson also believed, on the same authority, that at one of Steele's great dinner parties he had been obliged to dress up in expensive liveries, and to turn to use as additional footmen, certain bailiffs whose attendance, though unavoidable, might not else have seemed so creditable.[1] It was from Savage, too, Johnson heard the story of the bond put in execution against his friend by Addison, which Steele mentioned, he said, with tears in his eyes. Not so, however, did Steele tell it to another friend, Benjamin Victor, who, before Savage's relation was made public, had told it again to Garrick. To Victor, Steele said that certainly his bond on some expensive furniture had been put in force; but that, from the letter he received with the surplus arising from the sale, he knew that Addison only intended a friendly warning against a manner of living altogether too costly, and that, taking it as he believed it to be meant, he met him afterwards with the same gaiety of temper he had always shown.

This story is not incredible, we think; and to invent, as Mr. Macaulay has done, another story in place of one so well authenticated, involved at least some waste of ingenuity. One may fairly imagine such an incident following not long after the accession of King George, when, in his new house in York-buildings, Steele gave an extravagant entertainment to some couple of hundred friends, and amused his guests with a series of dramatic

[1] "I have heard," says the *Examiner* (No. 11), "of a certain illustrious person who having a guard du corps that forced their attendance upon him, put them into livery, and maintained them as his servants: thus answering that famous question, *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*"

recitations, which (one of his many projects) he had some thought of trying on an extended plan, with a view to the more regular supply of trained actors for the stage. For, though Addison assisted at this entertainment, and even wrote an epilogue[1] for the occasion making pleasant mirth of the foibles of his friend—

> "The Sage, whose guests you are to-night, is known
> To watch the public weal, though not his own," &c.

—nay, though we can hardly doubt that he showed no reluctance himself to partake of the burgundy and champagne, Addison may yet have thought it no unfriendly act to check the danger of any frequent repetition of indulgences in that direction. And, even apart from the nights they now very frequently passed together at Button's new coffee-house, we have abundant evidence that the friendly relations, though certainly not all the old intimacy, continued. On the day following that which lifted Addison to the rank of Secretary of State, Steele dined with him; and on the next day he wrote to his wife, that he was named one of the Commissioners for Forfeited Estates in Scotland.

The duties of this office took him much from home in his latter years; and before we close with the brief mention those years may claim from us, we will give a parting glance at what his home had now become. For the greater part of the time since he moved from Bury-street, he has lived in Bloomsbury-square. His wife has borne him four children, two boys and two girls, of whom the eldest boy, Richard, Lord Halifax's godson, died in childhood, and the second, Eugene, a few years before his father. His girls survived him, and the eldest became Lady Trevor. The old sudden alternations of sunshine and

[1] Doctor Drake attributed this epilogue to Steele himself, and has been followed by subsequent writers; but it was certainly written by Addison, as the lines themselves bear internal proof. It was first printed, and with Addison's name, in the eighth volume of that now rare book, Nichols's *Select Collection of Poems.*

storm have continued between himself and Prue. There have been great wants and great enjoyments, much peevishness and much tenderness, quarrels and reconciliations numberless; but very manifestly also, on the whole, the children have brought them nearer to each other. He is no longer his dearest Prue's alone, but, as he occasionally signs himself, "Your—Betty—Dick—Eugene "—Molly's—affectionate Richard Steele." At his own request, his wife's small fortune has been settled on these children; and one of her letters to him, upon the result of this arrangement with her mother, appears to have begun with the expression of her thankfulness that the children would at least have to say hereafter of their father that he kept his integrity. He gives her incessant reports of them when she happens to be absent. He tells her how Moll, who is the noisiest little creature in the world, and as active as a boy, has bid him let her know she fell down just now, and did not hurt herself; how Madam Betty is the gravest of matrons in her airs and civilities; how Eugene is a most beautiful and lusty child; and how Dick is becoming a great scholar, for whenever his father's *Virgil* is shown him he makes shrewd remarks upon the pictures. In that same letter he calls her his "poor, dear, angry, pleased, pretty, witty, silly, *everything* "Prue;" and he has never failed, through all these years, to send her the tenderest words on the most trivial occasions. He writes to her on his way to the Kit-Katt, in waiting on my Lord Wharton or the Duke of Newcastle. He coaxes her to dress well for the dinner, to which he has invited the Mayor of Stockbridge, Lord Halifax, and Mr. Addison. He writes to her in the brief momentous interval, when, having made his defence in the House of Commons, he was waiting for the final judgment which Addison was to convey to him. He writes to her when he has the honour of being received at dinner by Lord Somers; and he writes to her from among the "dancing, singing, "hooping, hallooing, and drinking," of one of his elections for Boroughbridge. He sends a special despatch to her

for no other purpose than to tell her she has nothing to do but be a darling. He sends her as many as a dozen letters in the course of his journey to Edinburgh ; and when, on his return, illness keeps them apart, one in London, the other at Hampton-court, her happening to call him *Good Dick* puts him in so much rapture, that he tells her he could almost forget his miserable gout and lameness, and walk down to her. Not long after this her illness terminated fatally. She died on the morrow of the Christmas Day of 1718.

Of the remaining ten years of his own subsequent life, many of both the private and public incidents of which have already been mentioned by anticipation, the occurrences of the greatest interest were his controversy with Addison on the Peerage bill, where we hold him, as we have already said, to have had much the advantage of his adversary in both his reasoning and conclusions ; and the production of his comedy of the *Conscious Lovers*, the most carefully written and the most successful, though in our opinion, with much respect for that of Parson Adams (who thought it as good as a sermon), not the best of his comedies. Of the projects that also occupied him in this interval, especially that of his fish-pool invention, we have nothing to say, but that Addison, who certainly did *not* sneer at him in the "little Dicky" of the second *Old Whig*, ought to have spared him, not less, the sneer in that pamphlet at his "stagnated pool." Steele did not retort, however, with anything more personal than an admiring quotation from *Cato ;* and his *Plebeian* forms in this respect no contrast to the uniform tone in which he spoke of his friend, with whom his transient difference would assuredly soon have been composed if another year of life had been spared to Addison. But his children were Steele's greatest solicitude, as well as chief delight, in these latter years, and, amid failing health and growing infirmities, he is never tired of superintending their lessons, or of writing them gay and entertaining letters, as from friend or play-fellow. After three years' retirement in Wales, attended

by his two little daughters, he died there at the age of fifty-three.

He had survived much, but neither his cheerful temper nor his kind philosophy. He would be carried out in a summer's evening, where the country lads and lasses were at their rural sports, and with his pencil give an order on his agent for a new gown to the best dancer. That was the last thing seen of Richard Steele. And the youths and maidens who so saw him in his invalid chair, enfeebled and dying, saw him still as the wits and fine ladies and gentlemen had seen him in his gaiety and youth, when he sat in the chair of Mr. Bickerstaff, creating pleasure for himself by the communication of pleasure to others, and in proportion to the happiness he distributed increasing his own.

CHARLES CHURCHILL.[1]

1731—1764.

The Poetical Works of Charles Churchill. With Copious Notes, and a Life of the Author. By W. Tooke, F.R.S. 3 vols. 12mo. London: 1844.

Mr. William Tooke sets us a bad example in his "copious notes,"[2] which we do not propose to follow. Our business is with Churchill; and not with the London University, or with the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, or with the Reform Bill, or with the Penny Postage Bill, or with the Dissenters' Marriage Act, or with the Whigs in general, or with Lord Campbell in particular, or with the Popish Ascendency, or with the voters of Metropolitan Boroughs, or with the members

[1] From the *Edinburgh Review*, January 1845. With additions.

[2] The common tendency of remarks upon individuals is to the too free indulgence either of blame or praise; and what is here said of Mr. Tooke does not altogether, I fear, escape this reproach. No one who examines the book under review, however, will say that the remarks in the Essay were unprovoked or without ample justification. Still I would gladly now have omitted them, if I could have done so without leaving uncorrected much grave error, or without exposing to possible misrepresentation hereafter both the matter and the motive of them. So long, however, as Mr. Tooke's "Copious Notes" of unprovoked and unscrupulous personal attack continue to disfigure what might easily have been made the best edition of a true English poet, their writer can have no good cause of complaint. I should add that the quotations in these pages from Churchill's Poetry and Satire, have not been taken from Mr. Tooke's volumes, but from the edition of the Poems (the third) issued in 1766 by the poet's brother and executor, John Churchill. *The Fragment of a Dedication to Warburton* is of later date, being the only composition of Churchill's not published until after his death.

who represent them in Parliament. There are many reasons why Mr. Tooke should not have named these things, far less have gone out of his way so lavishly to indulge his contempt and abuse of them; but we shall content ourselves with mentioning one. If the editorial pains bestowed upon them had been given to his author, we should probably not have had the task, which, before we speak of Churchill, we shall discharge as briefly as we may, of pointing out his editorial deficiencies.

It would be difficult to imagine a worse biographer than Mr. Tooke. As Dr. Johnson said of his friend Tom Birch, he is "a dead hand at a Life." Nor is he a more lively hand at a Note. In both cases he compiles with singular clumsiness, and his compilations are not always harmless. But though Mr. Tooke is a bad biographer and a bad annotator, he is a far worse critic.

If it were true, as he says, that "the character of "Churchill as a poet, may be considered as fixed in the "first rank of English classics" (i. xiii), we should have to place him with Shakespeare and Milton, in the rank above Dryden and Pope. If the *Rosciad* were really, as Mr. Tooke thinks, remarkable for its "strength of imagi-"nation" (i. xxxiv), we should have to depose it from its place beside the *Dunciads*, and think of it with the *Paradise Losts*. And indeed we shall be well disposed to do this, when Mr. Tooke establishes the critical opinion he adopts from poor Dr. Anderson, that the *Cure of Saul*, a sacred ode by Dr. Brown, "ranks with the most distin-"guished lyric compositions" (iii. 302).

This Dr. Brown, the author of the flat tragedy of *Barbarossa*, and a vain, silly, impracticable person, is described by Mr. Tooke to have been "a far wiser and better "man than Jeremy Bentham" (iii. 109); whose "always "mischievous, but happily not always intelligible, gib-"berish," is in a previous passage ranked with "the "coarse blasphemy of Richard Carlyle" (iii. 107). It is in the same discriminating taste we are told after this,

that Dr. Francklin's *Translation of Sophocles* is "a bold "and happy transfusion into the English language of the "terrible simplicity of the Greek tragedian" (iii. 298); —poor Dr. Francklin being as much like the terrible simplicity of the Greeks, as Mr. Tooke resembles Aristides, or an English schoolmaster is like the Phidian Jove.

The reader will not suppose that Mr. Tooke, a wealthy and respectable solicitor of long standing, and a gentleman who appears to have been really anxious to do good after his peculiar fashion, has not had ample time to set himself right on these points, when we mention the fact of his first appearance as Churchill's editor no fewer than forty years ago. Forty years ago, when he was in the flush of youth, and George the Third was King, he aspired to connect himself with the great satirist. What turned his thoughts that way, from the "quiddets and "quillets, and cases and tenures and tricks" that surrounded him in his daily studies, he has not informed us. But, among his actions of scandal and battery, the echo of Churchill's rough and manly voice was in that day lingering still; and an aspiring young follower of the law could hardly more agreeably indulge a taste for letters, than among the mangled and still bleeding reputations of the *Duellist*, the *Candidate*, and the *Ghost*. We have yet reason to complain, that he did not improve this taste with some little literary knowledge. In his notes to his favourite satirist he has drawn together, no doubt, a great mass of information; which cannot, however, be in any manner useful except to those who know better than himself not only how to select what is of any worth in it, but how to reject what is utterly worthless; and unhappily where it is not matter of fact but of opinion, even this chance is not left to them.

Whether he praises or blames, Mr. Tooke has the rare felicity of never making a criticism that is not a mistake. Nothing of this kind, committed forty years back, has he cared to correct; and every new note added, has added

something to the stock of blunders. He cannot even praise in the right place, when he has such a man as Dr. Garth to praise. Garth was an exquisite creature; a real wit, a gentleman, a friend, a physician, a philosopher; and yet his *Satire* was not "admirable," nor his *Claremont* "above mediocrity," nor his *Translations from Ovid* "spirited and faithful" (iii. 16-17). In an earlier page, Mr. Tooke has occasion to refer to the writer of a particular panegyric, whom he calls Conyngham (ii. 317). This exemplifies another and abundant class of mistakes in his volumes. The writer was Codrington, and the lines were addressed to Garth on his *Dispensary*. Mr. Tooke has to speak of the two Doctors William King; and he attributes the well-known three octavos of the King of St. Mary's-hall to the King of Christ-church (iii. 173). He has to speak of Bishop Parker, Marvell's antagonist, and he calls him Archbishop Parker (ii. 171); a singularly different person. He condemns Churchill for his public appearance in a theatre with a celebrated courtesan, whom his next sentence, if correct, would prove to have been a venerable lady of between eighty and ninety years old (i. 47);—the verses quoted having been written sixty-three years before, to the Venus of a past generation. If an anecdote has a point, he misses it; and if a question has two sides, he takes the wrong one. He gravely charges the old traveller Mandeville with wilful want of veracity, and with having "observed in a high northern latitude "the singular phenomenon of the congelation of words "as they issued from the mouth, and the strange medley "of sounds that ensued upon a thaw" (ii. 76);—vulgar errors, we need hardly say. Sir John Mandeville wrote conscientiously, according to the lights of his times; and qualifies his marvellous relations as reports. The congelation of words was a pure invention of Addison's, palmed off upon the old traveller.

In matters more closely connected with his subject, Mr. Tooke is not more sparing of errors and self-contradictions. He confounds Davies, the actor and bookseller—Johnson's

friend, Garrick's biographer, and a reasonably correct as well as fairly informed writer—with Davis, an actor not only much lower in the scale than Davies, but remembered only by the letter Mr. Tooke has printed (i. 36-7). He tells us, with amazing particularity, that "Churchill's "brother John survived him little more than one year, "dying, after a week's illness only, on the 18th November "1765" (i. lvi): the truth being that John, who was a surgeon-apothecary in Westminster, survived his brother many years; published, in the character of his executor, the fifth collected edition of his works as late as 1774; and was recommending the use of bark to Wilkes, whose medical attendant he became, as late as 1778. In one place he says that he, Mr. Tooke, has endeavoured, without success, to ascertain the truth of a statement that Churchill had a curacy in Wales, and became bankrupt in cider speculations there; suppositions which, unable to substantiate, he rejects (i. xxv). Yet in another place he speaks, without a doubt, of Churchill's "flight from "his curacy in Wales" (iii. 28); and in a third, tells us decisively that Churchill's "own failure in trade as a "cider-dealer," had "tinctured him with a strong and "unfounded prejudice" against the merchants of London (ii. 318). At one time he relates a story of Churchill's having incurred a repulse at Oxford, on account of alleged deficiency in the classics, to acquaint us that it "is obviously incorrect" (i. xxi). At another, he informs us that "the poet's antipathy to colleges may be dated "from his rejection by the University of Oxford, on "account of his want of a competent skill in the learned "languages" (ii. 227). No opportunity of self-contradiction is too minute to be lost. Now he says that the price of the *Rosciad* was half-a-crown (i. 114), and now that it was but "the moderate price of one shilling" (ii. 167). Now that Lord Temple resigned in 1761 (i. 170), and now that the resignation was in 1762 (ii. 29). Now that the *Apology* was published in April 1761 (i. 115), and, six pages later (i. 121), that it was published in May

of that year. Now that Churchill's Sermons were twelve in number (i. xxvi), and now, quoting Dr. Kippis, that they were ten (iii. 318). These instances, sparingly selected from a lavish abundance, will probably suffice.

We shall be equally sparing of more general examples that remain. Mr. Tooke, as the character of this literary performance would imply, has no deficiency on the score of boldness. Thus, while he thinks that "the Rev. "Doctor Croly, in his classical and beautiful play of "*Catiline*, has at once shown what a good tragedy should "be, and that he is fully equal to the task of producing "one" (ii. 297), he has an utter contempt for the Wordsworths and Coleridges. "What language," he indignantly exclaims, before giving a specimen of the latter poet *in a lucid interval*, "could the satirist have found sufficiently "expressive of his disgust at the *simplicity* of a later "school of poetry, the spawn of the lakes, consisting of "a mawkish combination of the nonsense verses of the "nursery, with the Rhodomontade of German mysticism "and transcendentalism!" (i. 189.) This is a little strong, for a writer like Mr. Tooke. Nor, making but one exception in the case of Lord Byron, does he shrink from pouring the vials of his critical wrath upon every Lord who has presumed to aspire to poetry. Not the gentle genius of Lord Surrey, or the daring passion of Lord Buckhurst; not the sharp wit of my Lords Rochester and Buckingham, or the earnestness and elegance of Lord Thurlow—can shake the fierce poetical democracy of Mr. William Tooke. "The *claim* of the whole lot of "other noble poets," he observes with great contempt, "from Lord Surrey downwards—the Buckinghams, the "Roscommons, the Halifaxes, the Grenvilles, the Lyttle-"tons of the last age, and the still minor class of "Thurlows, Herberts, and others of the present gene-"ration, *have* been tolerated as poets, only because *they* "were peers." (iii. 262.)

A contempt of grammar, as of nobility, may be observed to relieve the sense and the elegance of this passage.

But this is a department of Mr. Tooke's merits too extensive to enter upon. When he talks of "a masterly "*but* caustic satire" (i. xl), and of "plunging deeper and "*more irrecoverably* into," &c. (i. xli), we do not stop to ask what he can possibly mean. But his use of the prepositions and conjunctions is really curious. His "*and* to which we would refer our readers accordingly, "*and* to whose thanks we shall entitle ourselves for so "doing" (iii. 157); his "*and from which* but little infor- "mation could be collected, he was at the same time "confident that none others existed, *and which* the lapse "of time has confirmed" (iii. 296); are of perpetual recurrence in the shape of *and who*, or *but which*, and may be said to form the peculiarity of his style. On even Mr. Pickering's Aldine press, a genius of blundering has laid its evil touch. The errors in the printing of the book are execrable. Not a page is correctly pointed from first to last; numbers of lines in the text (as at iii. 216-17) are placed out of their order; and it is rare when a name is rightly given. But enough of a distasteful subject. We leave Mr. Tooke and pass to Churchill.

Exactly a hundred years after the birth of Dryden, Charles Churchill was born. More than a hundred years were between the two races of men. In 1631, Hampden was consoling Eliot in his prison, and discussing with Pym the outraged Petition of Right; in 1731, Walpole was flying at Townshend's throat, and suggesting to Gay the quarrels of Lockit and Peachum. Within the reach of Dryden's praise and blame, there came a Cromwell and a Shaftesbury; a Wilkes and a Sandwich exhausted Churchill's. There is more to affect a writer's genius in personal and local influences of this kind, than he would himself be willing to allow. If, even in the failures of the first and greatest of these satirists, there

is a dash of largeness and power; there is never wholly absent from the most consummate achievements of his successor, a something we must call conventional. But the right justice has not been done to Churchill. Taken with the good and evil of his age, he was a very remarkable person.

An English clergyman, who, in conjunction with his rectory of Rainham in Essex, held the curacy and lectureship of St. John the Evangelist in Westminster, from 1733 to his death in 1758, was the father of Charles Churchill. He had two younger sons: William, who afterwards chose the church for his profession, and passed a long, quiet, unobtrusive life within it; and John, brought up to the business of medicine. The elder, named Charles after himself, he from the first especially designed for his own calling; and he sent him in 1739, when eight years old, as a day-boy to Westminster school. Nichols was then the head master, and the second master was (not Lloyd, as Mr. Tooke would inform us, but) Johnson, afterwards a bishop. Vincent Bourne was usher of the fifth form, and Dr. Pierson Lloyd (after some years second master), a man of fine humour as well as of rare worth and learning, was usher at the fourth. Churchill, judging from the earliest notice taken of him, must have been already a robust, manly, broad-faced little fellow when he entered the school; all who in later life remembered him, spoke of the premature growth and fulness both of his body and mind;[1] and

[1] Mr. Cunningham has sent me a copy of the seventh edition of the *Rosciad* with a MS note by Sir John Cullum respecting the opinion entertained of its author by Sir John's Suffolk neighbour, and Churchill's old schoolfellow, Lord Bristol, which is somewhat opposed to that in the text. "This excellent poem," says Sir John, "was one of the earliest, if "not the first production of the "author, who was now about 37 "years old. He was of the same "class at Westminster School with "Frederick Earl of Bristol, who told "me that Churchill when a boy never "showed the faintest glimmer of "genius. May 1781." Sir John is mistaken as to the age of Churchill, who was only nine-and-twenty at the production of the *Rosciad*, and there will perhaps be no great harm in assuming that Lord Bristol was not much more correct in his boyish recollection of his celebrated schoolfellow.

he was not long in assuming the place in his boy's circle, which quick-sighted lads are not slow to concede to a deserving and daring claimant. He was fond of play; but, when he turned to work, was a hard and a successful worker. There is a story of one of his punishments by flogging, which only increased and embittered the temper that provoked it; but there is another, of a literary task by way of punishment, for which the offender received public thanks from the masters of the school. "He could do well if he would," was the admission of his enemies; and the good Dr. Lloyd loved him.

There were a number of remarkable boys at Westminster then. Bonnell Thornton was already in the upper forms; but George Colman, Robert Lloyd, Richard Cumberland, and Warren Hastings, were all, with very few years' interval, Churchill's contemporaries; and there was one mild, shrinking, delicate lad of his own age, though two years younger in the school, afraid to lift his eyes above the shoestrings of the upper boys, but encouraged to raise them as high as Churchill's heart. He stood by Cowper in those days; and the author of the *Task* and the *Table-Talk* repaid him in a sorer need. Indeed, there was altogether a manly tone of feeling among these Westminster scholars. In whatever respect they fell short of any promises of their youth when they grew to manhood, they yet continued true to all that in those earlier days had pledged them to each other. Never, save when two examples occurred too flagrant for avoidance, in a profligate duke and a hypocritical parson, did Churchill lift his pen against a schoolfellow. Mr. Tooke says that the commencement of a satire against Thornton and Colman was found among his papers; but there is no proof of this, and we doubt, in common with Southey, the alleged desertion of poor Lloyd which is said to have suggested the satire. Even Warren Hastings profited by his old connexion with Westminster, when Wilkes deserted his supporters in the House of Commons to defend the

playfellow of his dead friend; and the irritable Cumberland so warmed to the memory of his school companion, as to call him always, fondly, the Dryden of his age.

Literature itself had become a bond of union with these youths before they left the Westminster cloisters. The *Table-Talk* tells of the "little poets at Westminster," and how they strive "to set a distich upon six and five." Even the boredom of school exercises, more rife in English composition then than since, did not check the scribbling propensity. All the lads we have named had a decisive turn that way; and little Colman, emulating his betters, addressed his cousin Pulteney from the fifth form with the air of a literary veteran. For, in the prevailing dearth of great poetry, verse-writing was cultivated much, and much encouraged. Again it had become, as Lady Mary Montagu said of it a few years before, as common as taking snuff. Others compared it to an epidemical distemper—a sort of murrain. Beyond all doubt, it was the rage. "Poets increase and multiply to that stupendous "degree, you see them at every turn, in embroidered "coats, and pink-coloured top-knots." Nor was it probable, as to Churchill himself, that he thought the dress less attractive than the verse-tagging. But his father, as we have said, had other views with respect to him. He must shade his fancies with a more sober colour, and follow the family profession.

It was an unwise resolve. It was one of those resolves that more frequently mar than make a life. The forced control of inclinations to a falsehood is a common parent's crime; not the less grievous when mistaken for a virtue. The stars do not more surely keep their courses, than an ill-regulated manhood will follow a mis-directed youth. This boy had noble qualities for a better chosen career. Thus early he had made it manifest that he could see for himself and feel for others; that he had strong sensibility and energy of intellect; that where he had faith, he had steadiness of purpose and enthusiasm: but that, closely neighbouring his power, were vehe-

mence, will, and passion; and that these made him confident, inflexible, and very hard to be controlled. From the compelled choice now put before him, one of two results was sure. He would resist or he would succumb: in the one case, boasting exemption from vice, would become himself the victim of the worst of vices; or in the other, with violent recoil from the hypocrisies, would outrage the proprieties of life. The proof soon came.

Churchill had given evidence of scholarship in Latin and Greek as early as his fifteenth year, when, offering himself a candidate for the Westminster foundation, he went in head of the election; but on standing for the studentship to Merton-college, Oxford, three years later, he was rejected. Want of learning, premature indulgence of satirical tastes, and other as unlikely causes, have been invented to explain the rejection; but there can be little doubt that its real cause was the discovery of a marriage imprudently contracted some months before, with a Westminster girl named Scot, and accomplished within the rules of the Fleet. A marriage most imprudent, most unhappy. It disqualified him for the studentship. It introduced his very boyhood to grave responsibilities which he was powerless to discharge, almost to comprehend. What self-help he might have exerted against the unwise plans of his father, it crippled and finally destroyed. There is hardly a mistake or suffering in his after life, which it did not originate, or leave him without the means of repelling. That it was entered into at so early an age, and that it was effected by the scandalous facilities of the Fleet—were among its evil incidents, but not the worst. It encumbered him with a wife from whom he could not hope for sympathy, encouragement, or assistance in any good thing; and to whom he could administer them as little. Neither understood the other; or had that real affection which would have supplied all needful knowledge.

The good clergyman received them into his house soon after the discovery was made. The compromise seems to have been, that Churchill should no longer oppose his

father's wishes, in regard to that calling of the Church to which he afterwards bitterly described himself decreed, "ere it was known that he should learn to read." He was entered, but never resided, at Trinity in Cambridge. There was a necessary interval before the appointed age of ordination (for which he could qualify without a degree), and he passed it quietly: the first twelve months in his father's house; the rest in retirement, for which "family "reasons" are named but not explained, in the north of England. In that retirement, it is said, he varied church reading with "favourite poetical amusements;" with what unequal apportionment it might not be difficult to guess. The already congenial charm he may be supposed to have found in the stout declamation of Juvenal, in the sly and insinuating sharpness of Horace, and in the indignant eloquence of Dryden—had little rivalry to fear from the fervid imagination of Taylor, the copious eloquence of Barrow, or the sweet persuasiveness of South.

In 1753 he visited London, to take possession, it is said, of a small fortune in right of his wife; but there is nothing to show that he got the possession, however small. It is more apparent that the great city tempted him sorely; that boyish tastes were once more freely indulged; and that his now large and stalwart figure was oftener seen at theatres than chapels. It was a great theatrical time. Drury-lane was in its strength, with Garrick, Mossop, Mrs. Pritchard, Foote, Palmer, Woodward, Yates, and Mrs. Clive. Even in its comparative weakness, Covent-garden could boast of Barry, Smith, Shuter, and Macklin; of Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Vincent; and, not seldom, of Quin, who still lingered on the stage he had quitted formally two or three years before, and yet seemed as loth to depart from really, as Churchill, on these stolen evenings of enjoyment, from his favourite front row of the pit. Nevertheless, the promise to his father was kept: and, having now reached the canonical age, he returned to the north in deacon's orders; whence he removed, with little delay, to the curacy of South

Cadbury in Somersetshire. Here he officiated till 1756, when he was ordained priest, and passed to his father's curacy of Rainham.

Both these ordinations without a degree, are urged in special proof of his good character and reputation for singular learning; but there is reason to suspect his father's influence as having been more powerful than either. "His behaviour," says Dr. Kippis, writing in the *Biographia Britannica*, "gained him the love and esteem of his "parishioners; and his sermons, though somewhat "raised above the level of his audience, were commended "and followed. What chiefly disturbed him, was the "smallness of his income." This, though connected with a statement as to a Welsh living now rejected, has in effect been always repeated since, and may or may not be true. It is perhaps a little strange, if his sermons were thus elevated, commended, and followed, that no one recognised their style, or could in the least commend them, when a series of ten were published with his name eight years later; but the alleged smallness of his income admits of no kind of doubt. He had now two sons, and, as he says himself, "prayed and starved on forty pounds "a-year." He opened a school. It was bitter drudgery. He wondered, he afterwards told his friends, that he had ever submitted to it; but necessities more bitter overmastered him. What solid help this new toil might have given, however, was still uncertain, when, in 1758, his father died;[1] and, in respect to his memory, his parishioners elected the curate of Rainham to succeed him. At the close of 1758, Charles Churchill was settled in Westminster, at the age of twenty-seven, curate and lecturer of St. John's.

It was not a very brilliant change, nor did it enable him as yet to dispense with very mean resources. "The

[1] He died, Mr. Cunningham informs me, intestate. In the Prerogative Will Office, Doctors' Commons, is the entry of the administration of his effects.

"emoluments of his situation," observes Dr. Kippis, who was connected with the poet's friends, and, excepting where he quotes the loose assertions of the *Annual Register*, wrote on the information of Wilkes—"not "amounting to a full hundred pounds a-year, in order "to improve his finances he undertook to teach young "ladies to read and write English with propriety and "correctness; and was engaged for this purpose in the "boarding-school of Mrs. Dennis. Mr. Churchill con-"ducted himself in his new employment with all the "decorum becoming his clerical profession." The grave doctor would thus gently indicate the teacher's virtue and self-command, in showing him able to control, by the proper clerical decorums, his instruction of Mrs. Dennis's young ladies. Mr. Tooke's biography more confidently asserts, that not only as the servant of Mrs. Dennis, but as "a parochial minister, he performed his duties with "punctuality, while in the pulpit he was plain, rational, "and emphatic." On the other hand, Churchill himself tells us that he was not so. He says that he was an idle pastor and a drowsy preacher. We are assured, among the last and most earnest verses he composed, that "sleep at his bidding crept from pew to pew." With a mournful bitterness he adds, that his heart had never been with his profession; and that it was not of his own choice, but through need, and for his curse, he had ever been ordained.[1]

[1] "Much did I wish, e'en whilst I kept those sheep,
Which, for my curse, I was ordain'd to keep,
Ordain'd, alas! to keep through need, not choice,
Those sheep which never heard their shepherd's voice,
Which did not know, yet would not learn their way,
Which stray'd themselves, yet griev'd that I should stray;
Those sheep which my good father (on his bier
Let filial duty drop the pious tear)
Kept well, yet starv'd himself, e'en at that time
Whilst I was pure and innocent of rhyme,
Whilst, sacred dulness ever in my view,
Sleep at my bidding crept from pew to pew;
Much did I wish, though little could I hope,
A friend in him who was the friend of Pope."

It is a shallow view of his career that can differently regard it, or suppose him at its close any other than he had been at its beginning. Mr. Tooke, after his peculiar fashion, would "divide the life into two distinct and dis-"similar portions; the one pious, rational, and consistent; "the other irregular, dissipated, and licentious." During the first portion of seven-and-twenty years, says this philosophic observer, "with the exception of a few indis-"cretions, his conduct in every relation, as son, as "brother, as husband, as father, and as friend, was "rigidly and exemplarily, though obscurely virtuous; "while the remaining six years present an odious con-"trast." Why, with such convictions, Mr. Tooke edited the odious six years, and not the pure twenty-seven; why he published the poems, and did not collect the sermons; the philosopher does not explain. For ourselves let us add, that we hold with no such philosophy in Churchill's case, or in any other. Whatever the corrupting influence of education may be, or whatever the evil mistakes of early training, we believe that Nature is apt to show herself at all times both rational and consistent. She has no delight in monsters, and no pride in odious contrasts. Her art is at least as wise as Horace describes the art of poetry to be: she joins no discordant terminations to beginnings that are pure and lovely. Such as he honestly was, Churchill can afford to be honestly judged; and when he calls it his curse to have been ordained, he invites that judgment. He had grave faults, and paid dearly for them; but he set up for no virtue that he had not. In

In the same poem occurs the fine apostrophe to that friend of Pope:

"Doctor! Dean! Bishop! Glo'ster! and my Lord!
If haply these high titles may accord
With thy meek spirit; if the barren sound
Of pride delights thee, to the topmost round
Of Fortune's ladder got, despise not one
For want of smooth hypocrisy undone,
Who, far below, turns up his wondering eye,
And, without envy, sees thee placed so high."

The lines are in the *Dedication to Warburton*, iii. 317-19; 325-6.

the troubled self-reproaches of later years, he recalled no pure self-satisfactions in the past. To have been

> "Decent and demure at least,
> As grave and dull as any priest,"

was all the pretence he made. It was his disgrace, if the word is to be used, to have assumed the clerical gown. It was not his disgrace to seek to lay it aside as soon as might be.

That such was the direction of his thoughts, as soon as his father's death removed his chief constraint, is plain. His return to Westminster had brought him back within the sphere of old temptations; the ambition of a more active life, the early school aspirings, the consciousness of talents rusting in disuse, again disturbed him; and he saw, or seemed to see, distinctions falling on the men who had started life when he did, from the Literature which *he* might have cultivated with yet greater success. Bonnell Thornton and Colman were by this time established town wits; and with another schoolfellow (his now dissolute neighbour, Robert Lloyd, weary also of the drudgery of *his* father's calling, to which he had succeeded as an usher in Westminster school, and on the eve of rushing into the life of a professed man of letters), he was in renewed habits of daily intercourse. Nor, to the discontent thus springing up on all sides, had he any power of the least resistance in his home. His ill-considered marriage had by this time borne its bitterest fruit; it being always understood in Westminster, says Dr. Kippis, himself a resident there, "that Mrs. "Churchill's imprudence kept too near a pace with that "of her husband." The joint imprudence had its effect in growing embarrassment; continual terrors of arrest induced the most painful concealments; executions were lodged in his house; and his life was passed in endeavours to escape his creditors, perhaps not less to escape himself. It was then that young Lloyd, whose whole life had been a sad impulsive scene of licence, threw

open to him, without further reserve, his own reckless circle of dissipation and forgetfulness. It was entered eagerly.

In one of his later writings, he describes this time;[1] his credit gone, his pride humbled, his virtue undermined, himself sinking beneath the adverse storm, and the kind hand, whose owner he should love and reverence to his dying day, which was suddenly stretched forth to save him. It was that of good Dr. Lloyd, now under-master of Westminster: he saw the creditors, persuaded them to accept a composition of five shillings in the pound, and lent what was required to complete it. In this, with the generous wish to succour his favourite pupil, there may have been the hope of one more chance of safety for his son. But it was too late. At almost the same instant, young Lloyd deserted his ushership of Westminster to throw himself on literature for support; and Churchill, resolving to try his fate as a poet, prepared to abandon his profession. A formal separation from his wife, and a first rejection by the booksellers, date within a few months of each other.

At the close of 1760, he carried round his first effort in verse to those arbiters of literature, then all-powerful; for it was the sorry and helpless interval (so filled with calamities of authors) when the patron was completely gone, and the public had not fairly come. The *Bard*, written in Hudibrastic verse, was contemptuously rejected. But, fairly bent upon his new career, he was not the man to waste time in fruitless complainings. He wrote again, in a style more likely to be acceptable; and the *Conclave*, a satire aimed at the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, would have been published eagerly, but for a legal opinion on the dangers of a prosecution, interposed by the bookseller's friend. This was at once a lesson in the public taste, and in the caution with which it should be catered for. Profiting by it, Churchill with better fortune

[1] In *The Conference*, ii. 194-195.

planned his third undertaking. He took a subject in which his friend Lloyd had recently obtained success; in which severity was not unsafe, and to which, already firm as it was in the interest of what was called the Town, he could nevertheless give a charm of novelty. After "two "months' close attendance at the theatres," he completed *The Rosciad.*

It is not known to what bookseller he offered it, but it is certain that it was refused by more than one. Probably it went the round of The Trade: a trade more remarkable for mis-valuation of its raw material, than any other in existence. He asked five guineas for the manuscript (according to Southey, but Mr. Tooke says he asked twenty pounds), and there was not a member of the craft that the demand did not terrify. But he was not to be baffled this time. He possibly knew the merit of what he had done. Here, at any rate, into this however slighted manuscript, a something long restrained within himself had forced its way; and a chance he was determined it should have. It was no little risk to run in his position; but at his own expense he printed and published *The Rosciad.* It appeared without his name, after two obscure advertisements, in March 1761.

A few days served to show what *a hit* had been made. They who in a double sense had cause to feel it, doubtless cried out first; but *Who is He?* was soon in the mouths of all. Men upon town spoke of its pungency and humour; men of higher mark found its manly verse an unaccustomed pleasure; mere playgoers had its criticism to discuss; and discontented Whigs, in disfavour at Court for the first time these fifty years, gladly welcomed a spirit that might help to give discontent new terrors, and Revolution principles new vogue. Thus, in their turn, the wit, the strong and easy verse, the grasp of character, and the rude free daring of the *Rosciad,* were, within a few days of the appearance of its shilling pamphlet, the talk of every London coffee-house.

One remarkable piece of writing in it might well startle the town by the power it displayed. It was the full length picture of a noted frequenter of the theatres in those days, who had originated some shameful riots against Garrick's management of Drury-lane, the very vileness of whose character had been hitherto his protection, but who now saw himself gibbeted to universal scorn, where no man could mistake him, and none administer relief. It is one of the masterpieces of English satire; and being dependent for its interest on something higher than the individual likeness, it may still be presented, as Churchill desired it should be left, *without a name*.

A CHARACTER.

With that low cunning, which in fools supplies,
And amply too, the place of being wise;
Which Nature, kind indulgent parent, gave
To qualify the blockhead for a knave;
With that smooth falsehood, whose appearance charms,
And reason of each wholesome doubt disarms,
Which to the lowest depths of guile descends,
By vilest means pursues the vilest ends,
Wears friendship's mask for purposes of spite,
Fawns in the day, and butchers in the night;
With that malignant envy, which turns pale,
And sickens, even if a friend prevail,
Which merit and success pursues with hate,
And damns the worth it cannot imitate;
With the cold caution of a coward's spleen,
Which fears not guilt, but always seeks a screen,
Which keeps this maxim ever in his view—
What's basely done should be done safely too;
With that dull, rooted, callous impudence,
Which, dead to shame and ev'ry nicer sense,
Ne'er blush'd, unless, in spreading vice's snares,
She blunder'd on some virtue unawares;
With all these blessings, which we seldom find,
Lavish'd by nature on one happy mind,
A motley Figure, of the Fribble tribe,
Which heart can scarce conceive, or pen describe,
Came simpering on: to ascertain whose sex
Twelve sage, impannell'd matrons would perplex.

Nor male, nor female ; neither, and yet both ;
Of neuter gender, though of Irish growth ;
A six-foot suckling, mincing in It's gait ;
Affected, peevish, prim, and delicate ;
Fearful It seem'd, tho' of athletic make,
Lest brutal breezes should too roughly shake
It's tender form, and savage motion spread
O'er It's pale cheeks, the horrid manly red.
Much did It talk, in It's own pretty phrase,
Of genius and of taste, of players and plays ;
Much too of writings, which Itself had wrote,
Of special merit, though of little note ;
For Fate, in a strange humour, had decreed
That what It wrote, none but Itself should read :
Much too It chatter'd of dramatic laws,
Misjudging critics, and misplac'd applause,
Then, with a self-complacent jutting air,
It smil'd, It smirk'd, It wriggled to the Chair ;
And, with an awkward briskness not It's own,
Looking around, and perking on the throne,
Triumphant seem'd : when that strange savage Dame,
Known but to few, or only known by name,
Plain Common Sense appear'd, by Nature there
Appointed with plain Truth to guard the Chair,
The pageant saw, and, blasted with her frown,
To It's first state of nothing melted down.
Nor shall the Muse (for even there the pride
Of this vain Nothing shall be mortified)
Nor shall the Muse (should fate ordain her rhymes,
Fond, pleasing thought ! to live in after-times)
With such a trifler's name her pages blot ;
Known be the Character, the Thing forgot !
Let It, to disappoint each future aim,
Live without sex, and die without a name !

Other likenesses there were, too, named as well as gibbeted, because taken from a more exalted and more public stage ; and, prominent among them, the Scotch lawyer,

WEDDERBURNE.

To mischief train'd, e'en from his mother's womb,
Grown old in fraud, tho' yet in manhood's bloom,
Adopting arts by which gay villains rise,
And reach the heights which honest men despise ;

Mute at the bar, and in the senate loud,
Dull 'mongst the dullest, proudest of the proud ;
A pert, prim, Prater of the northern race,
Guilt in his heart, and famine in his face,
Stood forth : and thrice he waved his lily hand—
And thrice he twirl'd his tye—thrice strok'd his band.

But these, masterly as they might be, were only "limbs "and flourishes," for of course the substance of the satire was its picture of the Stage. And how finished was the portraiture, how vivid its reflection of the originals, how faithful the mirror it set up, in which the vainest, most sensitive, and most irritable of mankind, might see themselves for nothing better than they were, will appear in even the few incomplete subjects we here borrow from its gallery.

YATES.

In characters of low and vulgar mould,
Where nature's coarsest features we behold,
Where, destitute of ev'ry decent grace,
Unmanner'd jests are blurted in your face,
There Yates with justice strict attention draws,
Acts truly from himself, and gains applause.
But when, to please himself or charm his wife,
He aims at something in politer life,
When, blindly thwarting Nature's stubborn plan,
He treads the stage by way of gentleman,
The Clown, who no one touch of breeding knows,
Looks like Tom Errand dress'd in Clincher's clothes.
Fond of his dress, fond of his person grown,
Laugh'd at by all, and to himself unknown,
From side to side he struts, he smiles, he prates,
And seems to wonder what's become of Yates.

SPARKS, SMITH, AND ROSS.

Sparks at his glass sat comfortably down
To separate frown from smile, and smile from frown ;
Smith, the genteel, the airy, and the smart,
Smith was just gone to school to say his part ;
Ross (a misfortune which we often meet)
Was fast asleep at dear Statira's feet ;
Statira, with her hero to agree,
Stood on her feet as fast asleep as he.

MOSSOP.

Mossop, attach'd to military plan,
Still kept his eye fix'd on his right-hand man.
Whilst the mouth measures words with seeming skill,
The right-hand labours, and the left lies still;
For he resolved on scripture-grounds to go,
What the right doth, the left-hand shall not know.
With studied impropriety of speech
He soars beyond the hackney critic's reach;
To epithets allots emphatic state,
Whilst principals, ungrac'd, like lackies, wait;
In ways first trodden by himself excels,
And stands alone in indeclinables;
Conjunction, preposition, adverb, join
To stamp new vigour on the nervous line;
In monosyllables his thunders roll,
HE, SHE, IT, AND, WE, YE, THEY, fright the soul.

BARRY.

In person taller than the common size,
Behold where Barry draws admiring eyes!
When lab'ring passions, in his bosom pent,
Convulsive rage, and struggling heave for vent,
Spectators, with imagin'd terrors warm,
Anxious expect the bursting of the storm:
But, all unfit in such a pile to dwell,
His voice comes forth, like Echo from her cell;
To swell the tempest needful aid denies,
And all adown the stage in feeble murmurs dies.
What man, like Barry, with such pains, can err
In elocution, action, character?
What man could give, if Barry was not here,
Such well applauded tenderness to Lear?
Who else can speak so very, very fine,
That sense may kindly end with ev'ry line?
Some dozen lines before the ghost is there,
Behold him for the solemn scene prepare.
See how he frames his eyes, poises each limb,
Puts the whole body into proper trim.
From whence we learn, with no great stretch of art,
Five lines hence comes a ghost, and, Ha! a start.
When he appears most perfect, still we find
Something which jars upon, and hurts the mind;

Whatever lights upon a part are thrown
We see too plainly they are not his own.
No flame from Nature ever yet he caught;
Nor knew a feeling which he was not taught.;
He raised his trophies on the base of art,
And conn'd his passions, as he conn'd his part.

QUIN.

His words bore sterling weight; nervous and strong,
In manly tides of sense they roll'd along.
Happy in art, he chiefly had pretence
To keep up numbers, yet not forfeit sense.
No actor ever greater heights could reach
In all the labour'd artifice of speech . . . . .
His eyes, in gloomy socket taught to roll,
Proclaim'd the sullen habit of his soul.
Heavy and phlegmatic he trod the stage,
Too proud for tenderness, too dull for rage.
When Hector's lovely widow shines in tears
Or Rowe's gay rake dependent virtue jeers,
With the same cast of features he is seen
To chide the libertine, and court the queen.
From the tame scene, which without passion flows,
With just desert his reputation rose:
Nor less he pleased, when, on some surly plan,
He was, at once, the actor and the man.

HAVARD AND DAVIES.

Here Havard, all serene, in the same strains
Loves, hates, and rages, triumphs, and complains;
His easy vacant face proclaim'd a heart
Which could not feel emotions, nor impart.
With him came mighty Davies. On my life
That Davies hath a very pretty wife!
Statesman all over!—In plots famous grown!—
He mouths a sentence, as curs mouth a bone.

DAVID GARRICK.

Last Garrick came.—Behind him throng a train
Of snarling critics, ignorant as vain.
One finds out,—"He's of stature somewhat low,—
Your hero always should be tall you know.
True natural greatness all consists in height."
Produce your voucher, Critic.—"Sergeant Kite."

Another can't forgive the paltry arts,
By which he makes his way to shallow hearts;
Mere pieces of finesse, traps for applause—
"Avaunt! unnatural Start, affected Pause."
For me, by Nature form'd to judge with phlegm,
I can't acquit by wholesale, nor condemn.
The best things carried to excess are wrong:
The start may be too frequent, pause too long;
But, only us'd in proper time and place,
Severest judgment must allow them grace.
If bunglers, form'd on Imitation's plan,
Just in the way that monkies mimic man,
Their copied scene with mangled arts disgrace,
And pause and start with the same vacant face,
We join the critic laugh; those tricks we scorn
Which spoil the scenes they mean them to adorn.
But when, from Nature's pure and genuine source,
These strokes of acting flow with generous force,
When in the features all the soul's portray'd,
And passions, such as Garrick's, are display'd,
To me they seem from quickest feelings caught:
Each start is Nature, and each pause is Thought.
* * * * * *
The judges, as the sev'ral parties came,
With temper heard, with judgment weigh'd each claim
And, in their sentence happily agreed,
In name of both, Great Shakespeare thus decreed.
"If manly sense, if nature link'd with art;
If thorough knowledge of the human heart;
If powers of acting, vast and unconfined;
If fewest faults, with greatest beauties join'd;
If strong expression, and strange powers which lie
Within the magic circle of the eye;
If feelings which few hearts, like his, can know,
And which no face so well as his can show,
Deserve the preference;—Garrick! take the chair,
Nor quit it—till thou place an Equal there."

To account for the reception Satire commonly meets with in the world, and for the scant number of those who are offended with it, it has been compared to a sort of glass wherein beholders may discover every body's face but their own. The class whom the *Rosciad* principally offended, however, could discover nobody's face but their

own. It was the remark of one of themselves, that they ran about the town like so many stricken deer. They cared little on their own account, they said; but they grieved so very much for their friends. "Why should "this man attack Mr. Havard?" remonstrated one. "'I "am not at all concerned for myself; but what has poor "Billy Havard done, that he must be treated so cruelly?" To which another with less sympathy rejoined: "And "pray, what has Mr. Havard done, that he cannot bear "his misfortunes as well as another?" For, indeed, many more than the Billy Havards had their misfortunes to bear. The strong, quite as freely as the weak, were struck at in the *Rosciad*. The Quin, the Mossop, and the Barry, as we have seen, had as little mercy as the Sparks, the Ross, and the Davies; and even Garrick was too full of terror at the avalanche that had fallen, to rejoice very freely in his own escape. Forsooth, he must assume indifference to the praise, and suggest with off-hand grandeur to one of his retainers, that the writer had treated him civilly no doubt, with a view to the freedom of the theatre. He had the poor excuse for this fribbling folly (which Churchill heard of, and punished), that he did not yet affect even to know the writer; and was himself repeating the question addressed to him on all sides, *Who is He?*

It was a question which the *Critical Reviewers* soon took upon themselves to answer. They were great authorities in those days, and had no less a person than Smollett at their head. But here they bungled sadly. The field which the *Rosciad* had invaded, they seem to have thought their own; and they fell to the work of resentment in the spirit of the tiger commemorated in the *Rambler*, who roared without reply and ravaged without resistance. If they could have anticipated either the resistance or the reply, they would doubtless have been a little more discreet. No question could exist of the authorship, they said. The thing was clear. Who were they that the poem made heroes of? Messrs. Lloyd and Colman.

Then who could have written it? Why, who *but* Messrs. Lloyd and Colman? "*Claw me, claw thee,* as Sawney "says; and so it is; they go and scratch one another "like Scotch pedlars." Hereupon, for the *Critical Review* was a "great fact" then, Lloyd sent forth an advertisement to say that he was never "concerned or con-"sulted" about the publication, nor ever corrected or saw the sheets. He was followed by Colman, who took the same means of announcing "most solemnly" that he was "not in the least concerned." To these were added, in a few days, a third advertisement. It stated that Charles Churchill was the author of the *Rosciad,* and that his *Apology addressed to the Critical Reviewers,* would immediately be published. Before the close of the month this poem appeared.

On all who had professed to doubt the power of the new writer, the effect was prompt and decisive. The crowd so recently attracted by his hard hitting, now gathered round in greater numbers, to enjoy the clattering descent of such well-aimed blows on the astonished heads of unprepared reviewers. One half of the poem was a protest against the antipathies and hatreds that are the general welcome of new-comers into literature — the fact in natural history, somewhere touched upon by Warburton, that only pikes and poets prey upon their kind. The other half was a bitter depreciation of the Stage; mucl' in the manner, and hardly less admirable than the wit, of Hogarth. Smollett was fiercely attacked, and Garrick was rudely warned and threatened. Coarseness there was throughout, but a fearless aspect of strength; too great a tendency to say with willing vehemence whatever could be eloquently said, but in this a mere over-assertion of the consciousness of real power. In an age where most things were tame, except the practice of profligacy in all its forms—when Gray describes even a gout, and George Montagu an earthquake, of so mild a character that "you might stroke them"—it is not to be wondered at that this *Apology* should have gathered

people round it. Tame, it certainly was not. It was a curious contrast to the prevailing manner of even the best of such things. It was a fierce and sudden change from the *parterres* of trim sentences set within sweetbrier hedges of epigram, that were, in this line, the most applauded performances of the day.

Walter Scott's favourite passage in Crabbe was the arrival of the Strolling Players in the Borough. It was among the things selected by Lockhart to read aloud to him during the last mournful days in which his consciousness remained. Excellent as it is, however, it is but the pale reflection of those masterly lines in the *Apology* which we are now about to quote. As Garrick read them, he afterwards told his friends, he was so charmed and raised by the power of the writing, that he really forgot he was delighted when he ought to have been alarmed. He compared himself to the Highland officer who was so warmed and elevated by the heat of the battle that he had forgot, till he was reminded by the smarting, that he had received no less than eleven wounds in different parts of his body.

THE STROLLERS.

The strolling tribe, a despicable race,
Like wandering Arabs, shift from place to place.
Vagrants by law, to justice open laid,
They tremble, of the beadle's lash afraid,
And fawning cringe, for wretched means of life,
To Madame May'ress, or his Worship's Wife.
The mighty monarch, in theatric sack,
Carries his whole regalia at his back;
His royal consort heads the female band,
And leads the heir-apparent in her hand;
The pannier'd ass creeps on with conscious pride,
Bearing a future prince on either side.
No choice musicians in this troop are found
To varnish nonsense with the charms of sound;
No swords, no daggers, not one poison'd bowl;
No lightning flashes here, no thunders roll;

No guards to swell the monarch's train are shown ;
The monarch here must be a host *alone*.
No solemn pomp, no slow processions here ;
No Ammon's entry, and no Juliet's bier.
By need compell'd to prostitute his art,
The varied actor flies from part to part ;
And, strange disgrace to all theatric pride !
His character is shifted with his side.
Question and answer he by turns must be,
Like that small wit in Modern Tragedy
Who, to patch up his fame—or fill his purse—
Still pilfers wretched plans, and makes them worse ;
Like gypsies, lest the stolen brat be known,
Defacing first, then claiming for his own.
In shabby state they strut, and tatter'd robe ;
The scene a blanket, and a barn the globe.
No high conceits their moderate wishes raise,
Content with humble profit, humble praise.
Let dowdies simper, and let bumpkins stare,
The strolling pageant hero treads in air :
Pleas'd for his hour, he to mankind gives law,
And snores the next out on a truss of straw.
But if kind fortune, who sometimes we know
Can take a hero from a puppet show,
In mood propitious should her fav'rite call,
On royal stage in royal pomp to bawl,
Forgetful of himself he rears the head,
And scorns the dunghill where he first was bred.
Conversing now with well-dress'd kings and queens,
With gods and goddesses behind the scenes,
He sweats beneath the terror-nodding plume,
Taught by mock honours real pride to assume.
On this great stage, the World, no monarch e'er
Was half so haughty as a monarch-player.

The effect of the *Apology*, as we have said, was instant and decisive. Davies tells us that Smollett wrote to Garrick to ask him to make it known to Mr. Churchill, that he was not the writer of the notice of the *Rosciad* in the *Critical Review*. Garrick himself wrote to Lloyd with affected self-humility, as "his pasteboard Majesty of Drury-lane," to praise Mr. Churchill's genius, and to grieve that he should not have been vindicated by their common friend

from Mr. Churchill's displeasure.[1] The player accepted the poet's warning. There was no fear of his repeating the *bêtise* he had committed. To his most distinguished friends, to even the Dukes and Dowagers of his acquaintance, he was careful never to omit in future his good word for Mr. Churchill; and never, even when describing the "misery" the *Rosciad* had inflicted on a dear companion, did he forget his own "love to "Churchill." Affection for the satirist prevailed still over pity for his victims, and the manager and the poet lived together in amity, and Churchill dined at Hampton, to the last.

"I have seen the poem you mentioned, the *Rosciad*," writes Garrick's friend, Bishop Warburton, "and was "surprised at the excellent things I found in it; but "took Churchill to be a feigned name, so little do I know "of what is going forward;"—this good Bishop little thinking how soon he was to discover a reality to himself in what was going forward, hardly less bitter than Garrick had confessed in the letter to Lloyd, "of acting a "pleasantry of countenance while his back was most "wofully striped with the cat-o'-nine tails." The lively actor nevertheless subjoined: "I will show the supe- "riority I have over my brethren upon this occasion, "by seeming at least that I am not dissatisfied." He did not succeed: the acting was not so good as usual, and the superiority not so obvious. For in truth his brethren had the best of it, in proportion as they had less interest in the art so bitterly, and, it must be added, so unjustly assailed. "It was no small consolation to us,"

[1] "In his *Rosciad* he rais'd me too "high, in his *Apology* he may have "sunk me too low; he has done as "his Israelites did, made an Idol of "a calf, and now—the Idol dwindles "to be a calf again! To be a little "serious, you mentioned to me some "time ago that Mr. Churchill was "displeased with me, you must have "known whether justly or not. If "the first, you should certainly have "opened your heart to me and have "heard my apology; if the last, you "should as a common friend to both "have vindicated me, and then I "might have escaped his *Apology*. "But be it this or that or t'other, I "am still his great admirer," etc.—*Garrick to Robert Lloyd.*

says Davies, with great *naïveté*, "that our master was "not spared." Some of the more sensible went so far as to join in the laugh that had been raised against them; and Shuter asked to be allowed to "compote" and make merry with the satirist—a request at once conceded.

On the other hand, with not a few, the publication of Churchill's name had aggravated offence, and re-opened the smarting wound. But their anger did not mend the matter. Their *Anti-Rosciads, Triumvirates, Examiners*, and *Churchilliads*, making what reparation and revenge they could, amounted to but the feeble admission of their opponent's strength; nor did hostilities more personal accomplish other than precisely this. Parties who had met to devise retaliation, and who were observed talking loud against the Satirical Parson in the Bedford coffee-house, quietly dispersed when a brawny figure appeared, and Churchill, drawing off his gloves with a particularly slow composure, called for a dish of coffee and the *Rosciad*. Their fellow-performer, Yates, seeing the same figure darken the parlour-door of the Rose tavern where he happened to be sitting, snatched up a case-knife to do summary justice; and was never upon the stage so heartily laughed at, as when, somewhat more quietly, he laid it down. Foote wrote a lampoon against the Clumsy Curate, and with a sensible after-thought of fear (excellent matter of derision to the victims of a professed lampooner), suppressed it. Arthur Murphy less wisely published his, and pilloried himself; his *Ode to the Naiads of Fleet Ditch* being but a gross confession of indecency as well as imbecility—which was more than Churchill charged him with.[1]

"*No more* he'll sit," exclaimed this complacent and courageous counter-satirist, whose verses, silly as they

[1] Very different was Robert Lloyd's masterly *Epistle to C. Churchill*, in which, while he gibbeted

"Murphy, or Durfey, for it's all the same,"

he rendered worthy tribute not alone to his friend the author of the *Rosciad*, but to "manly Johnson," and Gray, and other true men of the time.

are, will give us a glimpse of the where and the how our hero sat at the theatre,

> "In foremost row before the astonish'd pit;
> In brawn Oldmixon's rival as in wit;
> And grin dislike,
> And kiss the spike;
> And giggle,
> And wriggle;
> And fiddle,
> And diddle," &c. &c.

But Churchill returned to his front row, "by Arthur "undismayed;" and still formidable was his broad burly face when seen from the stage behind that spike of the orchestra. "In this place he thought he could best "discern the real workings of the passions in the actors, "or what they substituted in the stead of them," says Davies, who had good reason to know the place. There is an affecting letter of his in the *Garrick Correspondence*, deprecating the manager's wrath. "During the run of "*Cymbeline*," he says (and of course, his line being the heavy business, he had to bear the burden of royalty in that play), "I had the misfortune to disconcert you "in one scene for which I did immediately beg your "pardon, and did attribute it to my accidentally seeing "Mr. Churchill in the pit, with great truth; it rendering "me confused and unmindful of my business." Garrick might have been more tolerant of poor Davies, recollecting that on a recent occasion even the royal robes of *Richard* had not wrapt himself from the consciousness of that ominous figure in the pit; and that he had grievingly written to Colman of his sense of the arch-critic's too apparent discontent.[1]

Thus, then, had Churchill, in little more than two months, sprung into a notoriety of a very remarkable, perhaps not of a very enviable kind, made up of admi-

[1] "My love to Churchill; his being "sick of Richard was perceived about "the house."—*Garrick to George Colman.*

ration and alarm. What other satirists had desired to shrink from, he seemed eager to brave; and the man, not less than the poet, challenged with an air of defiance the talk of the town. Pope had a tall Irishman to attend him after he published the *Dunciad*, but Churchill was tall enough to attend himself. One of Pope's victims, by way of delicate reminder, hung up a birch rod at Button's; but Churchill's victims might see their satirist any day walking Covent-garden unconcernedly, provided by himself with a bludgeon. What excuse may be suggested for this personal bravado will be drawn from the incidents of his early life. If these had been more auspicious, the straightforward manliness of his natural character would more steadily have sustained him to the last. As it was, even that noblest quality did him a disservice, being in no light degree responsible for his violent extremes. The restraint he had so long submitted to, once thrown aside, and the compromise ended, he thought he could not too plainly exhibit his new existence to the world. He had declared war against hypocrisy in all stations, and in his own would set it no example. The pulpit had starved him on forty pounds a-year; the public had given him a thousand pounds in two months; and he proclaimed himself, with little regard to the decencies in doing it, better satisfied with the last service than with the first. This was carrying a hatred of hypocrisy beyond the verge of prudence—indulging it indeed, with the satire it found vent in, to the very borders of licentiousness. He stripped off his clerical dress by way of parting with his last disguise, and appeared in a blue coat with metal buttons, a gold-laced waistcoat, a gold-laced hat, and ruffles.[1]

[1] In one of the numberless and now utterly forgotten satires which Churchill's popularity provoked, the Author of *Churchill Dissected* tells us—

"He skulks about, and, fearing to be known,
The better to deceive, puts off the gown:
In blue and gold now strutting like a peer
Cocks his lac'd beaver with a martial air."

Dean Zachary Pearce, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, remonstrated with him. He replied that he was not conscious of deserving censure. The dean thereupon observed, that the habit of frequenting play-houses was unfitting, and that the *Rosciad* was indecorous; to which he rejoined, that so were some of the classics which the dean had translated. The "dull dean's" third remonstrance as to dress met with the same fate; and it was not until the St. John's parishioners themselves took the matter in hand, a few months later, that Churchill resigned the lectureship of that parish. It was just that they should determine it, he said; and the most severe assailant of his turbulent life would hardly charge him with indifference at any time to what he really believed to be just. The date of his good fortune, and that of the comfort of his before struggling family, his "brother John "and sister Patty," were the same. The complainings of his wife were ended when his own poverty was ended, by the generous allowance he set aside for her support. Every man of whom he had borrowed was paid with interest; and the creditors, whose compromise had left them without a legal claim upon him, received, to their glad amazement, the remaining fifteen shillings in the pound. "In the instance," says Dr. Kippis, "which fell under my "knowledge as an executor and guardian, Mr. Churchill "voluntarily came to us and paid the full amount of the "original debt."

It was not possible with such a man as this, that any mad dissipation or indulgence, however countenanced by the uses of the time, could wear away his sense of its unworthiness, or entirely silence remorse and self-reproach. Nor is it clear that Churchill's heart was ever half so much with the scenes of gaiety into which he is now said to have recklessly entered, as with the friend by whose side he entered them. It is indeed mournfully confessed, in the opening of the Epistle to that friend which was his third effort in poetry, that it was to heal or hide their care they frequently met; that not to defy but

to escape the world, was too often their desire; and that the reason was at all times but too strong with each of them, to seek in the other's society a refuge from himself.

This Epistle, addressed to Lloyd, and published in October 1761, was forced from him by the public imputations, now become frequent and fierce, against the moral character of them both. Armstrong, in a poetical epistle to his friend "gay Wilkes," had joined with these detractors; and his *Day* suggested Churchill's *Night*. It ridiculed the judgments of the world, and defied its censure; which had the power to call bad names, it said, but not to create bad qualities in those who are content to brave such judgments. It had some nervous lines, many manly thoughts, and not a little questionable philosophy; but it proved to be chiefly remarkable for indicating the new direction of Churchill's satire. There had been rumours of his having intended a demolition of a number of minor actors hitherto unassailed, in a *Smithfield Rosciad;* and to a poor man's pitiable depreciation of such needless severity, he had deigned a sort of surly indignation at the rumour, but no distinct denial. It was now obvious that he contemplated other actors, and a very different theatre. Pitt had been driven to his resignation in the preceding month; "and," cried Churchill here, amid other earnest praise of that darling of the people,

> "What honest man but would with joy submit,
> To bleed with Cato and retire with Pitt!"

"Gay Wilkes" at once betook himself to the popular poet. Though Armstrong's Epistle had been addressed to him, he declared that he had no sympathy with it whatever; and he was sure that Armstrong himself, then abroad, had never designed it for publication. Other questions and assurances followed; and so began the friendship which only death ended. Wilkes had little strength or sincerity of feeling of any kind; but there is

no doubt that all he had was given to Churchill, and that he was repaid with an affection as hearty, brotherly, and true, as ever man inspired.

All men of all parties who knew John Wilkes at the outset of his extraordinary career, are in agreement as to the fascination of his manners. It was particularly the admission of those whom he had assailed most bitterly. "Mr. Wilkes," said Lord Mansfield, "was the pleasantest companion, the politest gentleman, and the best scholar, I ever knew." "His name," said Dr. Johnson, "has been sounded from pole to pole as the phœnix of convivial felicity." More naturally he added: "Jack has a great variety of talk; Jack is a scholar; and Jack has the manners of a gentleman." And every one will remember his characteristic letter to Mrs. Thrale: "I have been breaking jokes with Jack Wilkes upon the Scotch. Such, madam, are the vicissitudes of things." There is little wonder that he who could control vicissitudes of this magnitude, should so quickly have controlled the liking of Churchill. He was the poet's elder by four years; his tastes and self-indulgences were the same; he had a character for public morality (for those were the days of wide separation between public and private morality) as yet unimpeached; and when they looked out into public life, and spoke of political affairs, they could discover no point of disagreement. A curious crisis had arrived.

Nearly forty years were passed since Voltaire, then a resident in London, had been assured by a great many persons whom he met, that the Duke of Marlborough was a coward, and Mr. Pope a fool. Party went to sleep soon after, but had now reawakened to a not less violent extreme. The last shadow of grave opposition to the House of Hanover vanished with the accession of George III in 1760; and there was evil as well as good in the repose. With the final planting of the principle of freedom implied in the quiet succession of that House, men grew anxious to reap its fruit, and saw it nowhere

within their reach. Pitt's great administration, in the latter years of George II, merged these opening dissatisfactions in an overruling sense of national glory; but with the first act of the young King, with the stroke of the pen that made Lord Bute a privy councillor, they rose again. Party violence at the same time reawakened; and, parodying Voltaire's remark, we may say, that people were now existing who called William Pitt a pretender and Bubb Dodington a statesman.

To "recover monarchy from the inveterate usurpation "of oligarchy," was, according to the latter eminent person's announcement to his patron, the drift of the Bute system. The wisdom of a younger party in more modern days, which (copying some peevish phrases of poor Charles I) compares the checks of our English constitution to Venetian Doges and Councils of Ten,[1] had its rise in the grave sagacity of Bubb Dodington. The method of the proposed "recovery" was also notable, and has equally furnished precedents to later times. It was simply to remove from power every man of political distinction, and replace him with a convenient creature. Good means were taken. The first election of the new reign was remarkable for its gross veniality, nor had "undertakers" been so rife or so active since the reign of James I. One borough even publicly advertised itself for sale; and so far, by such means at least, the desired success appeared within easy reach. But any shrewd observer might foresee a great impending change under the proposed new system, in the reaction of all this on the temper of the people out of doors. Sir Robert Walpole did strange things with the House of Commons, but for great popular purposes; and already it was manifest enough that a mere bungling imitation of such things, for purposes wholly unpopular, would be quite a different matter. In a word, it was becoming tolerably clear to such a man as Wilkes,

[1] When this Essay was written (early in 1845) Mr. Disraeli had taken what was called the Young England party under his protection, and the expressions referred to will be found in *Coningsby*.

who had managed again to effect his return for the borough of Aylesbury, that a good day for a Demagogue was at hand.

He had the requisites for the character. He was clever, courageous, unscrupulous. He was a good scholar, expert in resource, humorous, witty, and a ready master of the arts of conversation. He could "abate and dis-"solve a pompous gentleman" with singular felicity. Churchill did not know the crisis of his fortune that had driven him to patriotism. He was ignorant, that, early in the preceding year, after loss of his last seven thousand pounds on his seat for Aylesbury, Mr. Wilkes had made an unsuccessful attempt upon the Board of Trade. He was not in his confidence when, a little later, Mr. Wilkes offered to compromise with Government for the embassy to Constantinople. He was dead when, many years later, Mr. Wilkes settled into a quiet supporter of the worst of "things as they were." What now presented itself in the form of Wilkes to Churchill, had a clear unembarrassed front,—passions unsubdued as his own, principles rather unfettered than depraved, apparent manliness of spirit, real courage, scorn of conventions, an open heart and a liberal hand, and the capacity of ardent friendship. They entered at once into an extraordinary alliance, offensive and defensive.

It is idle to deny that this has damaged Churchill with posterity, and that Wilkes has carried his advocate along with him into the Limbo of doubtful reputations. But we will deny the justice of it. It is absolutely due to Churchill that we should regard Wilkes from the point of view he presented between 1761 and 1764. He was then the patriot untried, the chamberlain unbought, befriended by Temple, countenanced by Pitt, persecuted by Bute, and, in two great questions which affected the vital interests of his countrymen, he was the successful assertor of English liberty. It is impossible to derive from any part of their intercourse one honest doubt of the sincerity of the poet. He flung himself, with perhaps unwarrantable

heat, into Wilkes's personal quarrels; but even in these, if we trouble ourselves to look for it, we find a public principle very often implied. The men who had shared with Wilkes in the obscene and filthy indulgences of Medmenham Abbey, were the same who, after crawling to the favourite's feet, had turned upon their old associate with disgusting pretences of indignation at his immorality. If, in any circumstances, Satire could be forgiven for approaching to malignity, it would be in the assailment of such men as these. The Roman senators who met to decide the fates of turbots, were not more worthy of the wrath of Juvenal.

As to those Medmenham Abbey proceedings, and the fact they indicate, we have nothing to urge but that the fact should be treated as it was. The late wise and good Dr. Arnold lamented that men should speak of religious liberty, the liberty being irreligious; and of freedom of conscience, when conscience is only convenience. But we must take this time now under consideration as we find it, —politics meaning something quite the opposite of morals; and one side shouting for liberty, while the other cries out for authority, without regard in the least to what neither liberty nor authority can give us, without patient earnestness in other labour of our own, of obedience, reverence, and self-control. We before remarked, that Churchill's genius was affected by this characteristic of the time; and that what, as he so often shows, might otherwise have lain within his reach,—even Dryden's massive strength, even Pope's exquisite delicacy,—*this* arrested. It was this which made his writing the rare mixture it too frequently is, of the artificial with the natural and impulsive; which so strangely and fitfully blended in him the wholly and the partly true; which impaired his force of style with prosaical weakness; and (to sum up all in one extreme objection), controlling his feeling for nature and truth by the necessities of partisan satire, levelled what he says, in too many cases, to a mere bullying reissue of conventional phrases and moral

commonplace. Yet he knew what the temptation should have weighed for, even while he yielded to it; and, from the eminence where satire had placed him, only yearned the more eagerly for the heights above.

> "Broad is the road, nor difficult to find
> Which to the house of Satire leads mankind;
> Narrow and unfrequented are the ways,
> Scarce found out in an age, which lead to Praise."

But it is not by the indifferent qualities in his works that Charles Churchill should be judged, and, as he has too frequently been, condemned. Judge him at his best; judge him by the men whom he followed in this kind of composition; and his claim to the respectful and enduring attention of the students of English poetry and literature, becomes manifest. Of the gross indecencies of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, he has none. He never, in any one instance, whether to fawn upon power or to trample upon weakness, wrote licentious lampoons. There was not a form of mean pretence, or servile assumption, which he did not denounce. Low, pimping politics, he abhorred: and that their vile abettors, to whose exposure his works are so incessantly devoted, have not carried him into utter oblivion with themselves, sufficiently argues for the sound morality and permanent truth expressed in his manly verse. He indulged too much in personal invective, as we have said; and invective is too apt to pick up, for instant use against its adversaries, the first heavy stone that lies by the wayside, without regard to its form or fitness. The English had not in his day borrowed from the French those nicer sharpnesses of satire which can dispense with anger and indignation; and which now, in the verse of Moore and Beranger, or in the prose of our pleasant *Mr. Punch*, suffice to wage all needful war with hypocrisy and falsehood.

In justice let us add to this latter admission, that Satire seems to us the only species of poetry which appears to be better understood than formerly. There is

a painful fashion of obscurity in verse come up of late years, which is marring and misleading a quantity of youthful talent; as if the ways of poetry, like those of steam and other wonderful inventions, admitted of original improvements at every turn. A writer like Churchill, who thought that even Pope had cramped his genius not a little by deserting the earlier and broader track struck out by Dryden, may be studied with advantage by this section of young England, and we recommend him for that purpose. Southey is excellent authority on a point of the kind; and he held that the injurious effects of Pope's dictatorship in rhyme were not a little weakened by the manly, free, and vigorous verse of Churchill, during *his* rule as tribune of the people.

Were we to offer exception, it would rest chiefly on the fourth published poem of Churchill, which followed his *Night*, and precedes what Southey would call his tribunitial career. This was the first book of the *Ghost*, continued, at later intervals, to the extent of four books. It was put forth by the poet as a kind of poetical *Tristram Shandy*—a ready resource for a writer who seized carelessly every incident of the hour; and who, knowing the enormous sale his writings could command, sought immediate vent for even thoughts and fancies too broken and irregular for a formal plan. The *Ghost*, in his own phrase, was

> "A mere amusement at the most;
> A trifle fit to wear away
> The horrors of a rainy day;
> A slight shot-silk for summer wear,
> Just as our modern statesmen are."

And though it contained some sharply written character, such as the well-known sketch of Dr. Johnson (*Pomposo*) and the allusions to laureat Whitehead[1] (whom he never

[1] Mr. Cunningham has favoured me with a characteristic notice of this attack by Whitehead himself, copied from the Nuncham MSS, which is well worth preserving in a note. The popularity of Churchill is not more

tires of laughing at); and some graceful easy humour, such as the fortune-teller's experience of the various gullibility of man; it is not, in any of the higher requisites, to be compared with his other writings. It is in the octo-syllabic measure, only twice adopted by him.

The reason of his comparative failure in this verse may be guessed. Partly no doubt it was, that he had less gusto in writing it; that, not having a peremptory call to the subject, he chose a measure which suited his indolence. Partly also we must take it to be, that the measure itself, by the constantly recurring necessity of rhyme (an easy necessity), tends to a slatternly diffuseness. The heroic line must have muscle as it proceeds, and thus tends to strength and concentration. The eight-syllable verse relies for its prop on the rhyme; and, being short, tends to do in two lines what the heroic feels bound to do in one. Nevertheless he could show his mastery here also, when the subject piqued or stirred him; and there

strikingly reflected in it than the fine-gentleman airs with which men of the class of Mr. Whitehead affected to regard him. The distinguished laureat, it will be observed, is shocked to hear from Lord Nuneham (to whose letter he is replying) that he is alleged to have spoken disrespectfully of Churchill at Lady Talbot's, when he really cannot recollect having ever heard the name mentioned in such company. Nevertheless as he proceeds he seems substantially to admit the charge. "You interest yourself very obligingly "with regard to the abuse which the "*Ghost* has thought proper to bestow "upon me. But I think of all those "things as a man of reason ought to "do; if what is said is true the "world knows it already, if false it "will only in the end hurt the authors "of the calumny. In either case "one ought to rest contented. As to "the speech you talk of at Lady "Talbot's, I really remember nothing "at all of the matter, nor that I "ever heard Churchill's name men-"tioned in such company. If I was "ever guilty of so vulgar and com-"mon place an expression, unless in "jest, in any company at all, I should "think I deserved a reprimand for it. "I may have lamented, and perhaps "with indignation, his throwing "away his talents on subjects un-"worthy of him, and chusing to be a "Poet upon the Town rather than "consulting the moral dignity of the "character, particularly as he was a "clergyman. I think so still, and am "afraid the worst enemy he will ever "meet with will be himself. A little "of the dull method he complains of "in me would be of infinite service "to him, for as yet he has written "nothing but Rhapsodys with striking "parts in them. His Legitimate "Works are still to come; and if they "ever do come, I shall be one of the "first to applaud them, for I honour "the Art though I seldom practise it." —*W. Whitehead to Lord Nuneham, Oct.* 24, 1762.

are few more effective things in his writings than some parts of his character of Warburton, to be found in the *Duellist*.

BISHOP WARBURTON.

"He was so proud, that should he meet
The twelve Apostles in the street,
He'd turn his nose up at them all,
And shove his Saviour from the wall:
He was so mean (meanness and pride
Still go together side by side),
That he would cringe, and creep, be civil,
And hold a stirrup for the Devil.
* * * * *
Brought up to London, from the plow
And pulpit, how to make a bow
He tried to learn; he grew polite,
And was the Poet's Parasite.
With wits conversing (and Wits then
Were to be found 'mongst Noblemen),
He caught, or would have caught, the flame,
And would be nothing, or the same.
He drank with drunkards, lived with sinners,
Herded with infidels for dinners;
With such an emphasis and grace
Blasphemed, that Potter kept not pace:
He, in the highest reign of noon,
Bawl'd bawdry songs to a psalm tune;
Lived with men infamous and vile,
Truck'd his salvation for a smile;
To catch their humour caught their plan,
And laugh'd at God to laugh with man;
Praised them, when living, in each breath,
And damn'd their memories after death.
"To prove his faith, which all admit
Is at least equal to his wit,
And make himself a man of note,
He in defence of Scripture wrote:
So long he wrote, and long about it,
That e'en believers 'gan to doubt it.
* * * *
In shape scarce of the human kind,
A man, without a manly mind;

No husband, though he's truly wed;
Though on his knees a child is bred,
No father; injured, without end
A foe; and though obliged, no friend;
A heart, which virtue ne'er disgrac'd;
A head, where learning runs to waste;
A gentleman well-bred, if breeding
Rests in the article of reading;
A man of this world, for the next
Was ne'er included in his text;
A judge of genius, though confess'd
With not one spark of genius bless'd;
Amongst the first of critics plac'd,
Though free from every taint of taste;
A Christian without faith or works,
As he would be a Turk 'mongst Turks;
A great divine, as lords agree,
Without the least divinity;
To crown all, in declining age,
Inflamed with church and party rage,
Behold him, full and perfect quite,
A false saint, and true hypocrite."

But to Churchill's career as fellow-tribune with Wilkes, we now return. The new system had borne rapid fruit. In little more than twelve months, Lord Bute, known simply before that date as tutor to the heir-apparent, and supposed holder of a private key to the apartments of the heir-apparent's mother, had made himself a privy-councillor; had turned the Duke of Cumberland and the Princess Amelia out of the liturgy; had given himself the rangership of Richmond Park; had dismissed Legge from the Exchequer, and emptied and filled other offices at pleasure; had made Sir Francis Dashwood, Wilkes's quondam associate and predecessor in the colonelcy of the Bucks militia, a King's minister; had made Bubb Dodington a lord; had turned out Pitt; had turned out Lord Temple; had turned out the Duke of Newcastle; had made himself Secretary of State; had promoted himself to be Prime Minister; had endued himself with the order of the Garter; had appointed to every lucrative

state office in his gift some one or other of his countrymen from the other side of the Tweed; and had taken under his special patronage a paper called the *Briton*, written by Scotchmen, presided over by Smollett, and started expressly to defend these things.

They had not, meanwhile, passed unheeded by the English people. When Pitt resigned, even Bubb Dodington, whilst he wished his lordship of Bute all joy of being delivered of a "most impracticable colleague, his majesty "of a most imperious servant, and the country of a most "dangerous minister," was obliged to add, that the people were sullen about it. "Indeed, my good friend," answered Bute, "my situation, at all times perilous, is "become much more so, for I am no stranger to the "language held in this great city: 'Our darling's resig-"'nation is owing to Lord Bute, and he must answer for "'all the consequences.'" The truth was, that the people of that day, with little absolute power of interference in public affairs, but accustomed to hear themselves appealed to by public men, were content to see their favourites in office, and to surrender the more substantial authority for a certain show of influence with such chosen Parliamentary leaders. But with the words of their "darling" ringing in their ears,—that he had been called to the ministry by the voice of the people, that to them he was accountable, and that he would not remain where he could not guide,—they began to suspect that they must now help themselves, if they would be helped at all. It is a dangerous thing to overstock either House with too strong an anti-popular party; it thrusts away into irresponsible quarters too many of the duties of opposition. Bute was already conscious of this, when the first number of the *North Briton* appeared.

The clever Colonel of Buckinghamshire militia, like a good officer, had warily waited his time. He did not apply the match till the train was fully laid, and an explosion sure. It has excited surprise that papers of such small talent should have proved so effective; but

much smaller talent would have finished a work so nearly completed by Bute himself. It was the minister, not the demagogue, who had arrayed one section of the kingdom in bitter hostility against the other. Demagogues can never do themselves this service; being after all the most dependent class of the community—mere lackeys to the lowest rank of uninstructed statesmen. A beggarly trade in sooth is their's, and only better than the master's whom they serve; for though it is bad enough to live by vexing and exposing a sore, it is worse to live by making one. There was violence on Wilkes's side; but there was also, in its rude coarse way, success. On the side of his opponents, there was violence, and there was incapacity. Wilkes wrote libels in abundance; only, as he wittily expressed it, that he might try to ascertain how far the Liberty of the Press could go. But his opponents first stabbed the Liberty of the Press in a thousand places, and then, as Horace Walpole said with a happier wit than Wilkes's, wrote libels on every rag of its old clothes.

Churchill from the first assisted in the *North Briton;* and wherever it shows the coarse broad mark of sincerity, there seems to us the trace of his hand. But he was not a good prose satirist. He wanted ease, delicacy, and fifty requisites beside, with which less able and sincere men have made that kind of work effective. He could sharpen his arrow-heads well, but without the help of verse could not wing them on their way. Of this he became himself so conscious, that when a masterly subject for increase of the rancour against the Scotch presented itself, and he had sent the paper to press for the *North Briton*, he brought it back from the printer, suppressed it, and recast it into verse. Wilkes saw it in progress, and praised it exultingly. "It is personal, it is poetical, it is political," cried the delighted demagogue. "It must succeed!" The *Prophecy of Famine*, a satire on Scotland and Scotchmen, appeared in January 1763, and did indeed fulfil the prophecy of Wilkes.

Its success was most remarkable. Its sale was rapid

and extensive to a degree altogether without precedent. English Whigs were in raptures, and the *Annual Register* protested that Mr. Pope was quite outdone. Scotch place-hunters outstripped even the English players in their performance of the comedy of fear; for they felt, with a yet surer instinct than that of Swift's spider when the broom approached, that to all intents and purposes of their existence the judgment-day was come. Nothing could have delighted Churchill as this did. The half-crowns that poured into his exchequer made no music comparable to that of these clients of Lord Bute, sighing and moaning in discontented groups around the place-bestowing haunts of Westminster. He indulged his exuberance of delight, indeed, with characteristic oddity and self-will. "I "remember well," says Dr. Kippis, "that he dressed his "younger son in a Scotch plaid, like a little Highlander, "and carried him everywhere in that garb. The boy being "asked by a gentleman with whom I was in company, why "he was clothed in such a manner? answered with great "vivacity, *Sir, my father hates the Scotch, and does it to "plague them!*" The anecdote is good. On the one side, there is what we may call attending to one's child's habits; and on the other, a satisfactory display of hereditary candour and impudence. There is also a fine straightforward style. Johnson himself could not have related the motive better. Put "his" instead of "my," and it is precisely what Johnson would have said. *Boswell.*—Sir, why does Churchill's little boy go about in a Scotch dress? *Johnson.*—Sir, his father hates the Scotch, and does it to plague them!

He plagued them thoroughly, that is certain; and with good cause. We need not tenderly excuse ourselves by Boswell's example for admiring the *Prophecy of Famine*. "It is indeed *falsely applied* to Scotland," says that good North Briton; "but on that account may be allowed a "greater share of invention." We need not darken what praise we give by the reservations of the last amiable and excellent historian of England. "It may yet be read,"

says Lord Mahon, "with all the admiration which the "most vigorous powers of verse, and the most lively "touches of wit *can earn, in the cause of slander and false-*"*hood.*" It seems to us that, without either forced apologies or hard words, we may very frankly praise this *Prophecy of Famine.* A great poet and a faithful Scotchman, Mr. Thomas Campbell, did not scruple to say of it, that even to the community north of Tweed it should sheathe its sting in its laughable extravagance; and in truth it is so written, that what was meant for the time has passed away with its virulent occasion, and left behind it but the lively and lasting colours of wit and poetry. "*Dowdy Nature,*" to use the exquisite phrase with which it so admirably contrasts the flaring and ridiculous vices of the day, has here too reclaimed her own, and dismissed the rest as false pretences. We should as soon think of gravely questioning its Scotch "cameleon," as of arguing against its witty and masterly exaggerations. With consummate ease it is written; sharp readiness of expression keeping pace with the swiftest ease of conception, never the least loitering at a thought, or labouring of a word. In this peculiar earnestness and gusto of manner, it is as good as the writers of Dryden's more earnest century. Marvel might have painted the Highland lass who forgot her want of food, as she listened to madrigals all natural though rude; "and, whilst she scratch'd her "lover into rest, sank pleased, though hungry, on her "Sawney's breast." Like Marvel, too, is the starving scene of withering air, through which no birds "except "as birds of passage" flew; and which no flower embalmed but one white rose, "which, on the tenth of June, "by instinct blows"—the Jacobite emblem, and the Pretender's birthday. In grasp of description, and a larger reach of satire, the Cave of Famine ranks higher still. The creatures which, when admitted in the ark, "their Saviour shunn'd, and rankled in the dark;" the webs of more than common size, where "half-starved "spiders prey'd on half-starved flies;" are more than

worthy of the master-hand of Dryden. But the reader will thank us for printing in detail the portions of the poem to which we have thus referred.

" Two boys, whose birth beyond all question springs
From great and glorious, though forgotten, kings,
Shepherds of Scottish lineage, born and bred
On the same bleak and barren mountain's head,
By niggard nature doom'd on the same rocks
To spin out life, and starve themselves and flocks,
Fresh as the morning, which, enrob'd in mist,
The mountain's top with usual dulness kiss'd,
Jockey and Sawney to their labours rose ;
Soon clad I ween, where nature needs no clothes,
Where, from their youth enur'd to winter skies,
Dress and her vain refinements they despise.
" Jockey, whose manly high-boned cheeks to crown,
With freckles spotted flam'd the golden down,
With meikle art could on the bag-pipes play,
E'en from the rising to the setting day ;
Sawney as long without remorse could bawl
Home's madrigals, and ditties from Fingal.
Oft, at his strains, all natural though rude,
The Highland lass forgot her want of food,
And, whilst she scratch'd her lover into rest,
Sunk pleased, though hungry, on her Sawney's breast.
" Far as the eye could reach, no tree was seen,
Earth, clad in russet, scorn'd the lively green.
The plague of locusts they secure defy,
For in three hours a grasshopper must die.
No living thing, whate'er its food, feasts there,
But the Cameleon, who can feast on air.
No birds, except as birds of passage flew ;
No bee was known to hum, no dove to coo.
No streams, as amber smooth, as amber clear,
Were seen to glide, or heard to warble here.
Rebellion's spring, which through the country ran,
Furnish'd, with bitter draughts, the steady clan.
No flowers embalm'd the air, but one white rose,
Which, on the tenth of June, by instinct blows,
By instinct blows at morn, and, when the shades
Of drizzly eve prevail, by instinct fades.
" One, and but one poor solitary cave,
Too sparing of her favours, nature gave ;

That one alone (hard tax on Scottish pride!)
Shelter at once for man and beast supplied.
There snares without entangling briars spread,
And thistles, arm'd against the invader's head,
Stood in close ranks, all entrance to oppose,
Thistles now held more precious than the rose.
All creatures which, on nature's earliest plan,
Were form'd to loath, and to be loath'd by man,
Which owed their birth to nastiness and spite,
Deadly to touch, and hateful to the sight,
Creatures which, when admitted in the ark,
Their Saviour shunn'd, and rankled in the dark,
Found place within: marking her noisome road
With poison's trail, here crawl'd the bloated toad;
There webs were spread of more than common size,
And half-starved spiders prey'd on half-starved flies;
In quest of food, efts strove in vain to crawl;
Slugs, pinched with hunger, smear'd the slimy wall;
The cave around with hissing serpents rung;
On the damp roof unhealthy vapour hung;
And Famine, by her children always known,
As proud as poor, here fix'd her native throne."

We cannot leave the poem without remarking the ingenuity of praise it has extorted from Mr. Tooke. It has been observed of it, he says, and for himself he adopts the observation, "that the author displays peculiar skill "in throwing his thoughts into poetical paragraphs, so "that the sentence swells to the conclusion, *as in prose!*" This we must call the first instance, within our knowledge, of an express eulogy of poetry on the ground of its resemblance to prose. Dr. Johnson was wont to note a curious delusion in his day, which has prevailed very generally since, that people supposed they were writing poetry when they did not write prose. Mr. Tooke and his friend represent the delusion of supposing poetry to be but a better sort of prose.

Churchill was now a marked man. He had an unbounded popularity with what are called the middle classes; he had the hearty praise of the Temple section of Whigs; he was "quoted and signed" by the ministerial faction for some desperate deed they but waited the

opportunity desperately to punish; he was the common talk, the theme of varied speculation, the very "comet of "the season," with all men. There had been no such sudden and wide popularity within the memory of any one living. The advantage of the position was obvious; and his friends would have had him discard the ruffles and gold lace, resume his clerical black coat, and turn it to what account he could. "His most intimate "friends," says the good Dr. Kippis, "thought his laying "aside the external decorums of his profession a blameable "opposition to the decencies of life, and likely to be "hurtful to his interest; since the abilities he was "possessed of, and the figure he made in political con-"tests, would perhaps have recommended him to some "noble patron, from whom he might have received a "valuable benefice!" Ah! good-natured friends! Could this unthinking man but have looked in the direction of a good benefice, with half the liquorish ardour of patriot Wilkes to his ambassadorships and chamberlainships in prospect, no doubt it *might* have fallen in his lap. What folly, then, to disregard it, and all for the pleasure of abusing what it would have been far more easy to praise!

"What but rank folly, for thy curse decreed,
Could into Satire's barren path mislead,
When, open to thy view, before thee lay
Soul-soothing Panegyric's flowery way?
There might the Muse have saunter'd at her ease,
And pleasing others, learn'd herself to please;
Lords should have listen'd to the sugar'd treat,
And ladies, simpering, own'd it vastly sweet;
Rogues, in thy prudent verse with virtue graced,
Fools mark'd by thee as prodigies of taste,
Must have forbid, pouring preferments down,
Such wit, such truth as thine to quit the gown.
Thy sacred brethren too (for they no less
Than laymen, bring their offerings to success)
Had hail'd thee good if great, and paid the vow
Sincere as that they pay to God, whilst thou
In lawn hadst whisper'd to a sleeping crowd,
As dull as Rochester, and half as proud."

But even the lawn itself, there is much reason to believe, would not have tempted Churchill. He "lacked "preferment" as little as the Prince of Denmark himself. He had no thought that way. He had no care but for what he had in hand; that, whilst he could hold the pen, "no rich or noble knave, should walk the earth in credit "to the grave," beneficed or unbeneficed. There was not a dispenser of patronage or power, though "kings "had made him more, than ever king a scoundrel made "before," whom he would have flattered or solicited. It was when his friend was sounding a noble acquaintance and quondam associate as to chances of future employment, that with sullen sincerity he was writing to his friend, "I fear the damned aristocracy is gaining ground "in this country." It was when his friend was meditating the prospective comforts of a possible mission to Constantinople, that he was beneath the portrait of his friend devoutly subscribing the line of Pope,

"A soul supreme in each hard instance tried."

When Horace Walpole anticipated the figure these days would cut in history, and laughingly described to his dear Marshal Conway how that the Warburtons and Gronoviuses of future ages would quote them, then living, like their wicked predecessors the Romans, as models of patriotism and magnanimity, till their very ghosts must blush; when he painted the great duke, and the little duke, and the old duke, and the Derbyshire duke, all powerful if they could but do what they could not—hold together and not quarrel for the plunder; when he set before him stark-mad opposition patriots, abusing one another more than anybody else, and Cæsar and Pompey scolding in the temple of concord,—though he did not omit Mr. Satirist Churchill from the motley scene, even Walpole did not think of impugning his rough plain-speaking sincerity. "Pitt more eloquent than Demosthenes, and trampling "on proffered pensions like . . . I don't know who; Lord "Temple sacrificing a brother to the love of his country;

" Wilkes as spotless as Sallust; and the flamen Churchill " knocking down the foes of Britain with statues of " the gods!" Certain it is, that with far less rich material than statues of the gods, Churchill transacted his work. It was a part of his hatred of the hypocrisies to work with what he had before him,—small ungodlike politicians enough, whom he broke into still smaller pieces, and paved Pitt's road with back into power.

Meanwhile his private life went on in its impetuous rounds of dissipation, energy, and self-reproach; hurried through fierce extremes, by contrast made more fierce. One of his existing notes to Garrick is the record of a drunken brawl, one of his letters to Wilkes the after penance of repentance; and painful is the recurrence of these and like confessions, in such fragments of his rough, reckless, out-spoken letters as chance has preserved for us.

Unable further to resist the storm that had been raised against him, Bute resigned on the 8th of April 1763. The formation of the new Ministry, with Dashwood ennobled as Lord le Despenser; with another monk of Medmenham Abbey, Lord Sandwich, popularly known as *Jemmy Twitcher*, placed a few months later at the Admiralty; and with Lord Halifax, Secretary of State; is to be read of, to this day, in the histories, or it might possibly be disbelieved. "And so Lord Sandwich and Lord " Halifax are statesmen, are they?" wrote Gray. "Do " not you remember them dirty boys playing cricket?" Truly they were still as dirty, and still playing out their game; only the game was much less reputable. "It is a " great mercy," exclaimed Lord Chesterfield, "to think " that Mr. Wilkes is the intrepid defender of our rights " and liberties; and no less a mercy that God hath " raised up the Earl of Sandwich to vindicate our religion " and morality."

The histories also record the publication, on the 23rd of April in the same year, of the forty-fifth number of the *North Briton*. A new Ministry has great superfluous energy, and an evil hankering to use it. The wished-for

occasion was supposed to have come; the new Ministers thought, at any rate, what Walpole calls a *coup-d'eclat* might make up for their own absurd insignificance; and on the information of the publisher, who was arrested and examined with the supposed printer, "that "Mr. Wilkes gave orders for the printing, and that "Mr. Churchill (the poet) received the profits arising "from the sale," warrants were issued for the arrest of Wilkes and Churchill.

The great questions that arose upon these warrants, and Wilkes's vindication through them of the most valuable privileges of English freedom, are well-known matters of history. Some curious incidents, preserved in his second letter to the Duke of Grafton, are less notorious. "I desired to see the warrant," he writes, after describing the arrival of the King's messenger. "He said it was against the authors, printers, and pub- "lishers of the *North Briton*, No. 45, and that his verbal "orders were, to arrest Mr. Wilkes. I told him the "warrant did not respect me; that such a warrant was "absolutely illegal and void in itself; that it was a "ridiculous warrant against the whole English nation;" (in effect, forty-eight persons were attacked under it: publishers were dragged from their beds, and whole officefuls of printers placed within durance) "and I "asked why he would rather serve it on me than on the "Lord Chancellor, or either of the Secretaries, or Lord "Bute, or Lord Corke, my next-door neighbour. The "answer was, *I am to arrest Mr. Wilkes.* About an hour "afterwards two other messengers arrived, and several "of their assistants. While they were with me, Mr. "Churchill came into the room. I had heard that their "verbal orders were likewise to apprehend him, but I "suspected they did not know his person; and, by "presence of mind, I had the happiness of saving my "friend. As soon as Mr. Churchill entered the room, I "accosted him: 'Good-morrow, Mr. Thomson. How "'does Mrs. Thomson do to-day?' Does she dine *in the*

" '*country?*' Mr. Churchill thanked me; said she then " waited for him; that he had only come for a moment to " ask me how I did; and almost directly took his leave. " He went home immediately, secured all his papers, and " retired into the country. The messengers could never " get intelligence where he was. The following week he " came to town, and] was present both the days of " hearing at the Court of Common Pleas."

On the second day, another was present: a Man whose name is now one of our English household words, but who unhappily thought more of himself that day as the King's serjeant painter—a dignity he had just received and was to wear for some brief months—than as that painter of the people who from youth to age had contended against every form of hypocrisy and vice, and, the unbribed and unpurchasable assailant of public and private corruption, was to wear such higher dignity for ever. As Chief Justice Pratt delivered his immortal judgment against General Warrants, Hogarth was seen in a corner of the Common Pleas, pencil and sketch-book in hand, fixing the famous caricature from which Wilkes, as long as caricature shall last, will squint upon posterity. Nor was it his first pictorial offence. The caricaturing had begun some little time before, greatly to the grief both of Wilkes and Churchill; for Hogarth was on friendly terms with both, and had indeed, within the past two years, drunk "divine milk-punch" with them and Sir Francis Dashwood, in the neighbourhood of Medmenham Abbey. Disregarding their earnest remonstrance, however, he assailed Pitt and Temple at the close of the preceding year in his first print of the *Times*. The *North Briton* retaliated, and the present caricature of Wilkes was Hogarth's rejoinder. It stung Churchill past the power of silence.[1]

[1] An unpublished letter of Churchill's is before me, which shows that open war between Hogarth and Churchill was declared immediately after the publication of the plate of "The "Times," in September 1762. The letter is worth quoting for other reasons. "Dear Garrick," it begins,

The *Epistle to William Hogarth* was published in July 1763. With here and there those strangely prosaic lines which appear in almost all his writings, and in which he seems to make careless and indolent escape from the subtler and more original words alike at his command, this was a dashing and vigorous work. With an avowal that could hardly have been pleasing to Wilkes himself, that railing thousands and commending thousands were alike uncared for by the writer, it struck Hogarth where

"Mrs. Churchill, that sweetest and "best of women, having entertained "me with some large and unexpected "demands from Gloucester, I should "take it as a very particular favour "if you would give me leave to "draw on you next week for between "forty and fifty pounds. There is "likely to become high fun between "Talbot and Wilkes—the immortal "Passado. The only thing I like "my gown for, is the exemption from "challenges." So far from desiring exemption from challenges, however, he would eagerly have braved them, and already his gown had been replaced by a gold-laced coat; but there was also, it is needless to remark, a bravado in affecting to be afraid. He continues: "I am bringing out—first "telling you that the *Ghost* walks at "Hampton on Wednesday next—a "*Scotch Eclogue* beginning thus." He then transcribes the first twenty-four lines of the *Prophecy of Famine*, with evident and just satisfaction in them; but as only four lines in this rough draft differ in any respect from the printed poem (as already quoted *ante*, p. 256), they are all that need here be repeated.

"Jockey and Sawney to their labours rose—
Soon drest, I wean, where Nature needs no cloaths,
Where, blest with genial suns and summer skies,
Dress and her vain refinements they despise."

In revising the poem for the press, he doubtless saw at once that the third of these lines was out of keeping with the "mist" and "dulness" dwelt upon in the earlier part of the description. The letter thus concludes: "I have seen Hogarth's print; sure "it is much unequal to the former "productions of that master of "humour. I am happy to find that "he hath at last declared himself, "for there is no credit to be got by "breaking flies upon a wheel. But "Hogarth's are subjects worthy of "an Englishman's pen. Speedily will "be published, an *Epistle to W. "Hogarth*, by C. Churchill.

'Pictoribus atque Poetis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua Potestas.'

"I was t'other day at Richmond, but "lost much of the pleasure I had "promised myself, being disappointed "of seeing you." An allusion follows, not quotable, to the Pagoda. "I "long for the opening of the House "on many accounts, but on none "more than the opportunity it will "give me of seeing that little "whimsical fellow Garrick, and that "most agreeable of women, to whom "I am always proud of being re-"membered—Mrs. Garrick. Hubert, "I hear, has got a weakness in his "eyes.

"I am, Dear Garrick,
"yours most sincerely,
"CHARLES CHURCHILL."

The only date to this letter is "Saturday night."

he was weakest: as well in that subjection to vanity which his friends confessed in him, as in that enslavement to all the unquiet distrusts of Envy, "who, with giant "stride, stalks through the vale of life by virtue's side," which he had even confessed in himself. We do not like to dwell upon it, so great is our respect for Hogarth's genius; but, at the least, it spared that genius. Amid its savage ferocity against the man, it was remarkable for a noble tribute to the artist. It predicted the duration of his works to the most distant age; and the great painter's power to curse and bless, it rated as that of "a "little god below."

"Justice with equal course bids Satire flow,
And loves the virtue of her greatest foe.
Oh! that I here could that rare Virtue mean,
Which scorns the rule of envy, pride, and spleen,
Which springs not from the labour'd works of art,
But hath its rise from Nature in the heart;
Which in itself with happiness is crown'd,
And spreads with joy the blessing all around!
But Truth forbids, and in these simple lays,
Contented with a different kind of praise,
Must Hogarth stand; that praise which Genius gives,
In which to latest time the Artist lives,
But not the Man; which, rightly understood,
May make us great, but cannot make us good.
That praise be Hogarth's; freely let him wear
The wreath which Genius wove, and planted there.
Foe as I am, should Envy tear it down,
Myself would labour to replace the crown.
"In walks of humour, in that cast of style,[1]
Which, probing to the quick, yet makes us smile;
In Comedy, his natural road to fame,
Nor let me call it by a meaner name,
Where a beginning, middle, and an end,
Are aptly join'd; where parts on parts depend,

[1] The poetical reader who is startled by this weak expression in the midst of lines so masterly, must yet accept it as characteristic of Churchill: for, as we observe in the text, he will constantly find in his writings, with regret and disappointment, such indolent escapes from the proper exercise of his vigour and genius.

Each made for each, as bodies for their soul,
So as to form one true and perfect whole ;
Where a plain story to the eye is told,
Which we conceive the moment we behold ;
Hogarth unrivall'd stands, and shall engage
Unrivall'd praise to the most distant age."

But this did not avail against the terrible severity. There is a passage beginning, "Hogarth. I take thee, "Candour, at thy word;" marked by a racy, idiomatic, conversational manner, flinging into relief the most deadly abuse, which we must think fairly appalling. All who knew the contending parties stood aghast. "Pray let me "know," wrote Garrick, then visiting at Chatsworth, to Colman, "how the town speaks of our friend Churchill's "*Epistle*. It is the most bloody performance that has "been published in my time. I am very desirous to "know the opinion of people, for I am really much, very "much hurt at it. His description of his age and infir- "mities is surely too shocking and barbarous. Is Hogarth "really ill, or does he meditate revenge? Every article "of news about these matters will be most agreeable to "me. Pray, write me a heap of stuff, for I cannot be "easy till I know all about Churchill and Hogarth." And of course the lively actor sends his "loves" to both Hogarth and Churchill. "Send me Churchill's poem on "Hogarth," writes old money-loving Lord Bath from Spa ; "but, if it be long, it will cost a huge sum in post- "age." With his rejoinder, such as it was, Hogarth lost little time. He issued for a shilling, before the month was out, "The Bruiser, C. Churchill (once the Rev), in "the character of a Russian Hercules, regaling himself "after having killed the monster Caricatura, that so "sorely galled his virtuous friend, the heaven-born "Wilkes." It was a bear, in torn clerical bands, and with paws in ruffles ; with a pot of porter that has just visited his jaws hugged on his right, and with a knotted club of *Lies* and *North Britons* clutched on his left; to which, in a later edition of the same print, he added a

scoffing caricature of Pitt, Temple, and Wilkes.[1] The poet meanwhile wrote to tell the latter, who had gone to Paris to place his daughter at school, that, Hogarth having violated the sanctities of private life in this caricature, he meant to pay it back with an *Elegy*, supposing him dead; but that a lady at his elbow was dissuading him with the flattery (and "how sweet is "flattery," he interposes, "from the woman we love!") that already Hogarth was killed.

That the offending painter was already killed, Walpole and others beside this nameless lady also affirmed; and Colman boldly avouched in print, that the *Epistle* had "snapped the last cord of poor Hogarth's heartstrings." But men like Hogarth do not snap their heartstrings so easily. The worst that is to be said of the fierce assault is bad enough. It embittered the last years of a great man's life; and the unlooked-for death, soon after, of assailant and assailed within only nine days of each other, prevented the reconciliation which would surely, sooner or later, have vindicated their common genius, the hearty English feeling which they shared, and their common cordial hatred of the falsehoods and pretences of the world.

The woman whose flattery Churchill loved, may not be omitted from his history. His connexion with her, which began some little time before this, gave him greater emotion and anxiety than any other incident of his life. "I forgot to tell you," writes Walpole to Lord Hertford, "and you may wonder at hearing nothing of the Rev. "Mr. Charles Pylades, while Mr. John Orestes is making "such a figure; but Doctor Pylades, the poet, has for-"saken his consort and the muses, and is gone off with a "stone-cutter's daughter. If he should come and offer "himself to you for chaplain of the embassy!" The cir-

[1] Portraits of Churchill are so rare that it may be worth while mentioning one at Lord Northampton's hospital at Greenwich, evidently of about this date, kit-katt size, and not in good condition, but genuine. The poet has a pen in his hand, and before him a letter, addressed to Wilkes in Paris. It was presented to the hospital in 1837 by Mr. Tatham, then warden.

cumstance has since been told by a sincerer man; and we shall alike avoid the danger of too much leniency and too great a severity, if we give it in his temperate language. "He became intimate with the daughter of a tradesman "in Westminster," says Southey in the *Life of Cowper* (she is described by others as the daughter of a highly respectable sculptor), "seduced her, and prevailed on her "to quit her father's house and live with him. But his "moral sense had not been thoroughly depraved; a fort-"night had not elapsed before both parties were struck "with sincere compunction, and through the intercession "of a true friend, at their entreaty, the unhappy penitent "was received by her father. It is said she would have "proved worthy of this parental forgiveness, if an elder "sister had not, by continued taunts and reproaches, ren-"dered her life so miserable, that, in absolute despair, she "threw herself upon Churchill for protection." He again received her, and they lived together till his death; but he did not, to himself or others, attempt to vindicate this passage in his career. A poem called the *Conference*, in which an imaginary lord and himself are the interlocutors, happened to engage him at the time; and he took occasion to give public expression to his compunction and self-reproach in a very earnest and affecting manner.

It may be well to quote the lines. They are not merely a confession of remorse,—they are also a proud profession of political integrity, in which all men may frankly believe. The Poem, one of his master-pieces, followed the *Epistle to Hogarth;* right in the wake of the abundant personal slander which had followed that work, and of the occurrence we have named. It began with a good picture of my Lord lolling backward in his elbow-chair, "with an insipid kind "of stupid stare, picking his teeth, twirling his seals "about—*Churchill, you have a poem coming out?*" The dialogue then begins, and some expressions are forced from Churchill as to the straits of life he has passed; and as to the public patronage, his soul abhorring all private help, which has brought him safe to shore. Alike secure from

dependence and pride, he says, he is not placed so high to scorn the poor, "Nor yet so low that I my Lord should "fear, Or hesitate to give him sneer for sneer." But that he is able to be kind to others, to himself most true, and feeling no want, can "comfort those who do," he proudly avers to be a public debt. Upon this the Lord rebukes him, setting forth the errors of his private life.

"Think (and for once lay by thy lawless pen),
Think, and confess thyself like other men;
Think but one hour, and, to thy conscience led
By reason's hand, bow down and hang thy head.
Think on thy private life, recall thy youth,
View thyself now, and own, with strictest truth,
That Self hath drawn thee from fair virtue's way
Farther than Folly would have dared to stray,
And that the talents liberal Nature gave
To make thee free, have made thee more a slave."

The reproach then draws from him this avowal:

"Ah! what, my Lord, hath private life to do
With things of public nature? why to view
Would you thus cruelly those scenes unfold
Which, without pain and horror, to behold,
Must speak me something more, or less than man;
Which friends may pardon, but I never can!
Look back! a thought which borders on despair,
Which human nature must, but cannot bear.
'Tis not the babbling of a busy world,
Where praise and censure are at random hurl'd,
Which can the meanest of my thoughts control,
Or shake one settled purpose of my soul.
Free and at large might their wild curses roam,
If All, if All, alas! were well at home.
No! 'tis the tale which angry Conscience tells,
When she with more than tragic horror swells
Each circumstance of guilt; when stern, but true,
She brings bad actions forth into review;
And, like the dread handwriting on the wall,
Bids late remorse awake at reason's call,
Arm'd at all points, bids scorpion vengeance pass,
And to the mind hold up reflection's glass,
The mind, which starting, heaves the heart-felt groan,
And hates that form she knows to be her own.

Enough of this. Let private sorrows rest.
As to the Public I dare stand the test:
Dare proudly boast, I feel no wish above
The good of England, and my Country's love."

This man's heart was in the right place. "Where is "the bold Churchill," cried Garrick, when he heard of the incident as he travelled in Rome. "What a noble "ruin! When he is quite undone, you shall send him "here, and he shall be shown among the great frag- "ments of Roman genius, magnificent in ruin!" But not yet was he *quite undone*. His weakness was as great as his strength, but his vices were not so great as his virtues. After all, in the unequal conflict thus plainly and unaffectedly revealed by himself, those vices had the worst of it. What rarely happens, indeed, where such high claims exist, has happened here, and the loudest outcry against the living Churchill has had the longest echo in our judgment of the dead; but there is a most affecting voice, in this and other passages of his writings, which enters on his better behalf the final and sufficing appeal. Nor were some of his more earnest contemporaries without the justice and generosity to give admission to it, even while he lived. As hero of a scene which shows the range of his character wider than the limits of his family, his dependents, or his friends (for the kite can be as comfortable to the brood beneath her as the pelican or dove), the young-hearted and enthusiastic Charles Johnson took occasion to depict Charles Churchill in *Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea.*

Whilst he was one night "staggering" home, as the narrative tells us, after a supper in which spirited wit and liveliness of conversation, as well as rectitude and sublimity of sentiment, had gilded gross debauchery, a girl of the street addressed him. "Her figure was elegant, and her "features regular; but want had sicklied o'er their beauty; "and all the horrors of despair gloomed through the languid "smile she forced, when she addressed him." The sigh of distress, which never struck his ear without affecting

his heart, came with double force from such an object. He viewed her with silent compassion for some moments; and, reaching her a piece of gold, bade her go home and shelter herself from the inclemencies of the night at so untimely an hour. Her surprise and joy at this unexpected charity overpowered her. She dropped upon her knees in the wet and dirt of the street, and raising her hands and eyes toward heaven, remained in that posture for some moments, unable to give utterance to the gratitude that filled her heart. Churchill raised her tenderly; and, as he would have pressed some instant refreshment upon her, she spoke of her mother, her father, and her infant brother, perishing of want in the garret she had left. "Good God!" he exclaimed, "I'll "go with you myself directly! But, stop. Let us first "procure nourishment from some of the houses kept open "at this late hour for a very different purpose. Come "with me! We have no time to lose." With this he took her to a tavern, loaded her with as much of the best as she could carry, and, putting two bottles of wine in his own pocket, walked with her to her miserable home. There, with what pains he could, he assuaged the misery, more appalling than he fancied possible; passed the whole night in offices of the good Samaritan; nor changed his dress next morning till he had procured them "a new "and better lodging, and provided for their future com-"fort; when, repressing as he could their prayers and "blessings, he took leave." How the recording angel sets down such scenes, and enters up the debtor and creditor account of such a man, My Uncle Toby has written.

The interval of absence from London during the progress of the case of the General Warrants, he passed at Oxford with Colman and Bonnell Thornton; and in Wales with her who had asked from him the protection she knew not where else to seek, and whom he ever after treated as his left-handed wife, united to him by indissoluble ties. On his return, in the autumn of 1763, he heard that Robert Lloyd had been thrown into the Fleet.

The *Magazine* he was engaged in had failed, and a dispute as to the proprietorship suddenly overwhelmed him with its debts. Churchill went to him; comforted him as none else could; provided a servant to attend him as long as his imprisonment should last; set apart a guinea a-week for his better support in the prison; and at once began a subscription for the gradual and full discharge of his heavy responsibilities. There was all the gratitude of the true poet in this: for, whatever may be said to the contrary, poets *are* grateful. Dr. Lloyd had been kind to Churchill, and Churchill never deserted Dr. Lloyd's son. And when, some few months later, he pointed his satire against the hollow Mæcenases of the day,—in rebuke to their affected disclaimer of his charge that they would have left a living Virgil to rot, he bade the vain boasters to the Fleet repair, and ask, "with blushes ask, if Lloyd "is there?"

We have called Churchill a true poet, and such, quite apart from his satirical power, we hold him to have been. Here, therefore, may be the place to offer one or two examples of the steady development of his genius, in despite of the reckless misgovernment of his life; and of the higher than satirical uses to which, if longer life had been spared to him, that genius must ultimately have been devoted. For this purpose we anticipate a little, and from a poem published some months after the present date take three passages that will richly assert its claim to have escaped the comparative oblivion into which it has most undeservedly fallen. The first (where the opening lines may recall the happy turns of Goldsmith) is an allusion to the Indian and American conquests, and the great question of

CIVILIZED AND SAVAGE.

"Happy the Savage of those early times,
Ere Europe's sons were known, and Europe's crimes!
Gold, cursed gold! slept in the womb of earth,
Unfelt its mischiefs, as unknown its worth;
In full content he found the truest wealth;
In toil he found diversion, food, and health;

Stranger to ease and luxury of courts,
His sports were labours, and his labours sports;
His youth was hardy, and his old age green;
Life's morn was vigorous, and her eve serene;
No rules he held, but what were made for use;
No arts he learn'd, nor ills which arts produce;
False lights he follow'd, but believ'd them true;
He knew not much, but liv'd to what he knew.
"Happy, thrice happy *now* the Savage race,
Since Europe took their gold, and gave them grace!
Pastors she sends to help them in their need,
Some who can't write, with others who can't read,
And on sure grounds the Gospel pile to rear,
Sends missionary felons every year;
Our vices, with more zeal than holy prayers,
She teaches them, and in return takes theirs;
Her rank oppressions give them cause to rise,
Her want of prudence, means and arms supplies,
Whilst her brave rage, not satisfied with life,
Rising in blood, adopts the scalping-knife;
Knowledge she gives, enough to make them know
How abject is their state, how deep their woe;
The worth of Freedom strongly she explains,
Whilst she bows down, and loads their necks with chains."

The next we may characterise as Churchill's Five Ages, and the whole passage, but especially the close, we cannot but regard as one of the master-pieces in this class of English poetry. The wit, the sense, the thought, the grace and strength of the verse, are incomparable.

INFANCY, CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, MANHOOD, AND OLD AGE.

"INFANCY, straining backward from the breast,
Tetchy and wayward, what he loveth best
Refusing in his fits, whilst all the while
The mother eyes the wrangler with a smile,
And the fond father sits on t'other side,
Laughs at his moods, and views his spleen with pride,
Shall murmur forth my name, whilst at his hand
Nurse stands interpreter, through Gotham's land.

"CHILDHOOD, who like an April morn appears,
Sunshine and rain, hopes clouded o'er with fears,
Pleas'd and displeas'd by starts, in passion warm,
In reason weak, who, wrought into a storm,

Like to the fretful bullies of the deep,
Soon spends his rage, and cries himself asleep,
Who, with a feverish appetite oppress'd,
For trifles sighs, but hates them when possess'd,
His trembling lash suspended in the air,
Half bent, and stroking back his long, lank hair,
Shall to his mates look up with eager glee,
And let his top go down to prate of me.

"YOUTH, who fierce, fickle, insolent and vain,
Impatient urges on to manhood's reign,
Impatient urges on, yet with a cast
Of dear regard, looks back on childhood past,
In the mid-chase, when the hot blood runs high,
And the quick spirits mount into his eye,
When pleasure, which he deems his greatest wealth,
Beats in his heart, and paints his cheeks with health,
When the chaf'd steed tugs proudly at the rein,
And, ere he starts, hath run o'er half the plain,
When, wing'd with fear, the stag flies full in view,
And in full cry the eager hounds pursue,
Shall shout my praise to hills which shout again,
And e'en the huntsman stop to cry Amen.

"MANHOOD, of form erect, who would not bow
Though worlds should crack around him; on his brow
Wisdom serene, to passion giving law,
Bespeaking love, and yet commanding awe;
Dignity into grace by mildness wrought;
Courage attemper'd and refined by thought,
Virtue supreme enthroned; within his breast
The image of his Maker deep impress'd;
Lord of this earth, which trembles at his nod,
With reason bless'd, and only less than God;
MANHOOD, though weeping Beauty kneels for aid,
Though honour calls in danger's form array'd,
Though, clothed with sackcloth, Justice in the gates,
By wicked Elders chain'd, redemption waits;
Manhood shall steal an hour, a little hour,
(Is't not a little one?) to hail my power.

"OLD AGE, a second child, by nature curst
With more and greater evils than the first,
Weak, sickly, full of pains; in every breath
Railing at life, and yet afraid of death;
Putting things off, with sage and solemn air,
From day to day, without one day to spare;

Without enjoyment, covetous of pelf,
Tiresome to friends, and tiresome to himself,
His faculties impair'd; his temper sour'd,
His memory of recent things devour'd
E'en with the acting, on his shatter'd brain
Though the false registers of youth remain;
From morn to evening babbling forth vain praise
Of those rare men, who lived in those rare days
When he, the hero of his tale, was young,
Dull repetitions faltering on his tongue;
Praising grey hairs, sure mark of Wisdom's sway,
E'en whilst he curses time which made him grey,
Scoffing at youth, e'en whilst he would afford
All, but his gold, to have his youth restored;
Shall for a moment, from himself set free,
Lean on his crutch, and pipe forth praise to me."

And observe the exquisite beauty of the lines which follow, where the poet touchingly paraphrases what he had doubtless often read out of his Bible to his congregations.[1] Let the reader mark above all the charming effect of the repetition, which might seem in after days to have lingered in the ear of that great poet who was soon to spring from the ranks of the peasantry of Scotland, and whose genius and independence, if Churchill could have lived to know them, would with him have far outweighed a wilderness of Butes and Wedderburnes.

"Can the fond Mother from herself depart?
Can she forget the darling of her heart,
The little darling whom she bore and bred,
Nursed on her knees, and at her bosom fed?
To whom she seem'd her every thought to give,
And in whose life alone, she seem'd to live?
Yes, from herself the Mother may depart,
She may forget the darling of her heart,
The little darling, whom she bore and bred,
Nursed on her knees, and at her bosom fed,
To whom she seem'd her every thought to give,
And in whose life alone she seem'd to live;

[1] "Can a woman forget her sucking "child, that she should not have "compassion on the son of her "womb? Yea, they may forget, yet "will I not forget thee." *Isaiah* xlix. 15.

But I can not forget, whilst life remains,
And pours her current through these swelling veins,
Whilst memory offers up at reason's shrine,
But I can not forget that Gotham's mine."

The close of the year 1763 witnessed one or two notable events, not needful to be other than slightly dwelt upon here, since history has attended to them all. On the motion of Mr. Grenville (whose jealousy of Pitt had broken the Temple phalanx) in the lower House, the *North Briton* was ordered to the hangman's hands to be burnt; and on the motion of Lord Sandwich in the upper, Wilkes was committed to the hands of the Attorney-general for prosecution, as the alleged writer of a privately printed immoral parody of Pope's *Essay on Man*. Some whispers of this latter intention had been carried to Churchill before the session opened, during Wilkes's temporary absence at Paris; but, according to the affidavit of one of the printers concerned, the poet scorned the possibility of public harm to his friend from a private libel, which he did not believe him to have written, and of which not a copy that had not been stolen (a man named Kidgell, whom Walpole calls a dirty dog of a parson, was the thief and government-informer) was in circulation. He therefore roughly told the printer who brought him his suspicions, that "for anything the people "in power could do, they might be damned." But he had greatly underrated, if not the power of these people in the ordinary sense, at least their power of face.

Lord Sandwich rose in his place in the House of Lords, the *Essay on Woman* in his hand, with all the indignant gravity of a counsel for the morality of the entire kingdom. "It was blasphemous!" exclaimed the first Lord of the Admiralty. (And who should know blasphemy better than a blasphemer, for had not the first Lord been expelled the Beef-steak Club for the very sin he charged on Wilkes? But he knew his audience, and went steadily on.) He read the *Essay on Woman* till the decorous Lord Lyttelton begged the reading might be stopped: he dwelt upon a

particular note, which, by way of completing the burlesque, bore the name of Pope's last editor, till Warburton rose from the bench of Bishops, begged pardon of the devil for comparing him with Wilkes, and said the blackest fiends in hell would not keep company with the demagogue when he should arrive there. Nothing less than the expulsion of the man from Parliament (he was already expelled from the Colonelcy of the Bucks militia, and Lord Temple from the Bucks lord-lieutenancy for supporting him) could satisfy this case.

Expulsion was a happy expedient for controlling the elective franchise, which the popular Walpole had himself resorted to; but in such wise that the popular franchise seemed all the more safely guaranteed by it. Now the people saw it revived and enforced, for purposes avowedly and grossly unpopular. They were asked, by men whose whole lives had shamelessly proclaimed the prevailing divorce between politics and morals, to sanction the principle that a politician should be made accountable for immorality; and Morality herself, howsoever regretting it, might hardly blame them for the answer they gave. They resisted. They stood by Wilkes more determinedly than ever, and excitement was raised to a frightful pitch. A friend of Sandwich's, who, the day after his motion against the *Essay*, cried out exultingly that "nobody but he could "have struck a stroke like this," was obliged to confess, only eight days later, that the "blasphemous book had "fallen ten times heavier on Sandwich's head than on "Wilkes's, and had brought forward such a catalogue of "anecdotes as was incredible." Nay, so great was the height things went to, that even Norton's impudence forsook him; and Warburton, who had expunged Pitt's name for Sandwich's in the dedication to his forthcoming *Sermons*, thought it best to reinstate Pitt very suddenly.

Nevertheless, the result of the ministerial prosecution drove Wilkes to France. There was a design that Churchill, after publication of the poem which arose out of these transactions, and which Horace Walpole thought

"the finest and bitterest of his works" (the *Duellist*), should have followed his friend; inquiries being meanwhile set on foot as to whether the French government would protect them in efforts to assail their own. The answer was favourable, but the scheme was not pursued. On excellent grounds it has been surmised that Churchill's English feeling revolted at it; and he was essential to its success. For his reputation even now, limited as his themes had been, was not limited to England. "I don't "know," wrote Horace Walpole to Sir H. Mann, in one of his lately published letters, "whether this man's fame "has extended to Florence; but you may judge of the "noise he makes in this part of the world by the following "trait, which is a pretty instance of that good-breeding "on which the French pique themselves. My sister and "Mr. Churchill are in France. A Frenchman asked him "if he was Churchill *le fameux poète?—Non.—Ma foi, "Monsieur, tant pis pour vous!*" To think that it should be so much the worse for the son of a General, and the husband of a Lady Maria, daughter to an Earl, not to be a low-bred scribbler! Nevertheless, to this day, the world takes note of only one Charles Churchill. Whether so much the worse, or so much the better, for the other, it is not for us to decide.

The poet, then, stayed in England; and worked at his self-allotted tasks with greater determination than ever. Satire has the repute of bringing forth the energies of those who, on other occasions, have displayed but few and feeble; and many a man from whom nothing vigorous was looked for, has lost his cramps and stiffnesses among the bubbles of these hot springs. We need not wonder, therefore, that Churchill, though with his Beef-steak and other clubs to attend to, his *North Briton* to manage, and, not seldom, sharp strokes of illness to struggle with, should never have sent forth so many or such masterly works as in the last nine months of his rapid and brilliant career.

He was also able to do so much because he was thorough master of what he had to do. He understood

his own powers too completely to lay any false strain upon them. The ease with which he composed is often mentioned by him, though with a difference. To his Friend he said that nothing came out till he began to be pleased with it himself, while to the Public he boasted of the haste and carelessness with which he set down and discharged his rapid thoughts. Something between the two would probably come nearest the truth. No writer is at all times free from what Ben Jonson calls, "pinching throes;" and Churchill frequently confesses them. It may have been, indeed, out of a bitter sense of their intensity that he used the energetic phrase, afterwards remembered by his publisher, that "blotting was like "cutting away one's own flesh." But though this and other marks of the *genus irritabile* undoubtedly declared themselves in him, he did not particularly affect the life of a man of letters, and, for the most part, avoided that kind of society; for which Dr. Johnson pronounced him a blockhead. Boswell remonstrated. "Well, sir," said Johnson, "I will acknowledge that I have a better opinion "of him than I once had; for he has shown more fertility "than I expected. To be sure, he is a tree that cannot "produce good fruit: he only bears crabs. But, sir, a "tree that produces a great many crabs is better than a "tree which produces only a few."

Such as it was—and it can afford that passing touch of blight—the tree was now planted on Acton-common. After the departure of Wilkes, he had moved from his Richmond residence into a house there, described by the first of his biographers, two months after his death, to have been furnished with extreme elegance; and where he is said, by the same worthy scribe, to have "kept his post-chaise, saddle-horses, and pointers;" and to have "fished, fowled, hunted, coursed, and lived in an "independent, easy manner." He did not however so live, as to be unable carefully to lay aside an honourable provision for all who were dependent on him. This, it is justly remarked by Southey, was his meritorious motive

for that greediness of gain with which he was reproached; —as if it were any reproach to a successful author that he doled out his writings in the way most advantageous to himself, and fixed upon them as high a price as his admirers were willing to pay. Cowper has made allusion to some of these points, in his fine delineation of his old friend and school-fellow, in the *Table-Talk*.[1]

[1] "Contemporaries all surpass'd, see one,
Short his career, indeed, but ably run.
Churchill, himself unconscious of his powers,
In penury consumed his idle hours,
And like a scatter'd seed at random sown,
Was left to spring by vigour of his own.
Lifted at length, by dignity of thought
And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,
He laid his head in luxury's soft lap,
And took too often there his easy nap.
If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,
'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.
Surly and slovenly and bold and coarse,
Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force;
Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,
Always at speed, and never drawing bit,
He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,
And so disdain'd the rules he understood,
The laurel seem'd to wait on his command,
He snatch'd it rudely from the Muse's hand."

I subjoin also, from Cowper's delightful correspondence, what he wrote to Mr. Unwin in 1786, on the appearance of a new edition of the English Poets. "It is a great thing to be "indeed a poet, and does not happen "to more than one man in a century. "Churchill, the great Churchill, "deserved the name of poet; I have "read him twice, and some of his "pieces three times over, and the last "time with more pleasure than the "first. The pitiful scribbler of his "life seems to have undertaken that "task, for which he was entirely un-"qualified, merely because it afforded "him an opportunity to traduce him. "He has inserted in it but one "anecdote of consequence, for which "he refers you to a novel, and intro-"duces the story with doubts about "the truth of it. But his barrenness "as a biographer I could forgive, if "the simpleton had not thought him-"self a judge of his writings, and "under the erroneous influence of "that thought, informed his reader "that *Gotham*, *Independence*, and "the *Times*, were catchpennies. "*Gotham*, unless I am a greater "blockhead than he, which I am far "from believing, is a noble and "beautiful poem, and a poem with "which I make no doubt the author "took as much pains as with any he "ever wrote. Making allowance (and "Dryden, in his *Absalom and Achi-"tophel*, stands in need of the same "indulgence) for an unwarrantable "use of Scripture, it appears to me "to be a masterly performance. *In-"dependence* is a most animated "piece, full of strength and spirit, "and marked with that bold masculine "character which, I think, is the "great peculiarity of this writer. "And the *Times* (except that the "subject is disgusting to the last "degree) stands equally high in my "opinion. He is indeed a careless "writer for the most part; but where "shall we find, in any of those authors "who finish their works with the

The *Author*, published almost contemporaneously with the *Duellist*, had the rare good fortune to please even his critics. Horace Walpole could now admit, that even when the satirist was not assailing a Holland or a Warburton, the world were "transported" with his works, and his numbers were indeed "like Dryden's." The Monthly Reviewers sent forth a frank eulogium, while even the Critical found it best to forget their ancient grudge. And in the admirable qualities not without reason assigned to it, the *Author* seems to us to have been much surpassed by his next performance, *Gotham*.

When Cowper fondly talked, as it was his pleasure and his pride to do, of "Churchill, the great Churchill, "for he well deserved the name," it was proof of his taste that he dwelt with delight on this "noble and beautiful" poem. Its object was not clearly comprehended at the first, but, as it proceeded, became evident. It was an *Idea of a Patriot King*, in verse; and in verse of which, with all its carelessness, we hold with Cowper that few exacter writers of his class have equalled, for its "bold and daring strokes of fancy; its numbers so

"exactness of a Flemish pencil, those "bold and daring strokes of fancy, "those numbers so hazardously ven- "tured upon and so happily finished, "the matter so compressed and yet "so clear, and the colouring so "sparingly laid on and yet with "such a beautiful effect? In short, "it is not his least praise that he is "never guilty of those faults as a "writer, which he lays to the charge "of others. A proof that he did not "judge by a borrowed standard, or "from rules laid down by critics, but "that he was qualified to do it by his "own native powers, and his great "superiority of genius. For he that "wrote so much, and so fast, would, "through inadvertency and hurry, "unavoidably have departed from "rules which he might have found in "books; but his own truly practical "talent was a guide which could not "suffer him to err. A race-horse is "graceful in his swiftest pace, and "never makes an awkward motion "though he is pushed to his utmost "speed. A cart-horse might perhaps "be taught to play tricks in the "riding-school, and might prance "and curvet like his betters, but at "some unlucky time would be sure "to betray the baseness of his "original. It is an affair of very "little consequence perhaps to the "well-being of mankind, but I cannot "help regretting that he died so soon. "Those words of Virgil, upon the "immature death of Marcellus, might "serve for his epitaph:

'Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent.'"

Southey's Cowper, vol. vi. p. 9—11.

" hazardously ventured upon, and so happily finished; its " matter so compressed, and yet so clear; its colouring so " sparingly laid on, and yet with such a beautiful effect." Largely would we have added, if possible, to the quotations already given from this poem, and it is with much regret we necessarily restrict ourselves to but one passage more. It is a piece of descriptive poetry of a very high class. The reader's national pride, if he be a Scotchman, will not intercept his admiration of the wit of the verse which precedes the fine picture of the cedar; and he will admire through all the lines, but especially at their close, the excellent and subtle art with which the verse seconds the sense.

" Forming a gloom, through which to spleen-struck minds
Religion, horror-stamp'd, a passage finds,
The Ivy, crawling o'er the hallow'd cell,
Where some old hermit's wont his beads to tell
By day, by night; the Myrtle ever green,
Beneath whose shade love holds his rites unseen;
The Willow, weeping o'er the fatal wave
Where many a lover finds a watery grave;
The Cypress sacred held, when lovers mourn
Their true love snatch'd away; the Laurel worn
By poets in old time, but destin'd now,
In grief to wither on a Whitehead's brow;
The Fig, which, large as what in India grows,
Itself a grove, gave our first parents cloaths;
The Vine, which, like a blushing new-made bride,
Clustering, empurples all the mountain's side;
The Yew, which, in the place of sculptur'd stone,
Marks out the resting-place of men unknown;
The hedge-row Elm; the Pine of mountain race;
The Fir, the Scotch Fir, never out of place;
The Cedar, whose top mates the highest cloud,
Whilst his old father Lebanon grows proud
Of such a child, and his vast body laid
Out many a mile, enjoys the filial shade;
The Oak, when living, monarch of the wood;
The English Oak, which, dead, commands the flood;
All, one and all, shall in this Chorus join,
And, dumb to other's praise, be loud in mine . . . .

The Showers, which make the young hills, like young lambs,
Bound and rebound, the old hills, like old rams,
Unwieldy, jump for joy ; the Streams, which glide,
Whilst Plenty marches smiling by their side,
And from their bosom rising Commerce springs ;
The Winds which rise with healing on their wings,
Before whose cleansing breath contagion flies ;
The Sun, who, travelling in eastern skies,
Fresh, full of strength, just risen from his bed,
Though in Jove's pastures they were born and bred,
With voice and whip can scarce make his steeds stir,
Step by step up the perpendicular ;
Who, at the hour of eve, panting for rest,
Rolls on amain, and gallops down the west,
As fast as Jehu, oil'd for Ahab's sin,
Drove for a crown, or postboys for an inn ;
The Moon, who holds o'er night her silver reign,
Regent of tides, and mistress of the brain,
Who to her sons, those sons who own her power,
And do her homage at the midnight hour,
Gives madness as a blessing, but dispenses
Wisdom to fools, and damns them with their senses ;
The Stars, who, by I know not what strange right,
Preside o'er mortals in their own despite,
Who without reason govern those, who most
(How truly judge from hence !) of reason boast,
And, by some mighty magic yet unknown,
Our actions guide, yet cannot guide their own ;
All, one and all, shall in this Chorus join,
And, dumb to others' praise, be loud in mine."

Gotham was less successful than the more personal satires, and the author might have felt, as his " great " high priest of all the nine " did, when he remembered the success of *MacFlecknoe*, amid the evil days on which the *Religio Laici* and *Hind and Panther* had fallen. Nothing ever equalled a satire for a sale, said the old bookseller Johnson to his son Samuel—a good swinging satire, " or a " *Sacheverell's Trial!*" There was no need, however, that Churchill should have had this recalled to his memory, for so timely a subject came unexpectedly to hand, that in no case could he have resisted it. Lord Sandwich became a candidate for the high stewardship of Cambridge University.

"I thank you," wrote Lord Bath to Colman, "for the "*Candidate*, which is, in my opinion, the severest and the "best of all Churchill's works. He has a great genius, "and is an excellent poet." Notwithstanding which praise, from a somewhat questionable critic, we shall not hesitate to aver that the *Candidate* really is an excellent poem, with lines as fine in it as any from Churchill's hand. Such are those wherein the miseries of evil counsel to royalty are dwelt upon; and Kings are described as "made to draw their breath, In darkness thicker than the "shades of Death." But we must present in detail at least a part of the portrait of Lord Sandwich, its hero.

"From his youth upwards to the present day,
When vices more than years have marked him grey;
When riotous excess with wasteful hand
Shakes life's frail glass, and hastes each ebbing sand,
Unmindful from what stock he drew his birth,
Untainted with one deed of real worth,
Lothario, holding honour at no price,
Folly to folly added, vice to vice,
Wrought sin with greediness, and sought for shame
With greater zeal than good men seek for fame.
"Where (reason left without the least defence)
Laughter was mirth, obscenity was sense,
Where impudence made decency submit,
Where noise was humour, and where whim was wit,
Where rude, untemper'd license had the merit
Of liberty, and lunacy was spirit,
Where the best things were ever held the worst,
Lothario was, with justice, always first.
"To whip a top, to knuckle down at taw,
To swing upon a gate, to ride a straw,
To play at push-pin with dull brother peers,
To belch out catches in a porter's ears,
To reign the monarch of a midnight cell,
To be the gaping chairman's oracle,
Whilst, in most blessed union, rogue and whore
Clap hands, huzza, and hiccup out, Encore,
Whilst grey authority, who slumbers there
In robes of watchman's fur, gives up his chair;
With midnight howl to bay the affrighted moon,
To walk with torches through the streets at noon,

To force plain nature from her usual way,
Each night a vigil, and a blank each day,
To match for speed one feather 'gainst another,
To make one leg run races with his brother,
'Gainst all the rest to take the northern wind,
Bute to ride first, and He to ride behind,
To coin newfangled wagers, and to lay 'em,
Laying to lose, and losing not to pay 'em;
Lothario, on that stock which nature gives,
Without a rival stands, *though March yet lives.*"

Admirable is all this, without doubt, and the last is a fine touch; yet it might perhaps be doubted, were we to compare it with the character of Buckingham by Dryden, whether it might not seem as an impressive and startling list of materials for satire, rather than as that subtler extract of the very spirit of satire itself which arrests us in the elder poet. But it is writing of a most rare order.

The *Farewell*, and the *Times* (the latter to be referred to only as Dryden refers to some of the nameless productions of Juvenal, tragical provocations tragically revenged), now followed in rapid succession; and *Independence*, the last work published while he lived, appeared at the close of September 1764. It is a final instance of Mr. Tooke's misfortunes in criticism, that though he admits this poem to display "vigour" in some scattered passages, he sets it down as "slovenly in composition, "hacknied in subject, and commonplace in thought." It is very far from this! A noble passage at the commencement is worthy of Ben Jonson himself, and very much in his manner.

"What is a Lord? Doth that plain simple word
Contain some magic spell? As soon as heard,
Like an alarum bell on Night's dull ear,
Doth it strike louder, and more strong appear
Than other words? Whether we will or no,
Through reason's court doth it unquestion'd go
E'en on the mention, and of course transmit
Notions of something excellent, of wit
Pleasing, though keen? of humour free, though chaste?
Of sterling genius with sound judgment graced?

Of virtue far above temptation's reach,
And honour, which not malice can impeach?
Believe it not. 'Twas Nature's first intent,
Before their rank became their punishment,
They should have pass'd for men, nor blush'd to prize
The blessings she bestow'd. She gave them eyes,
And they could see. She gave them ears, they heard:
The instruments of stirring, and they stirr'd.
Like us, they were design'd to eat, to drink,
To talk, and (every now and then) to think.
Till they, by pride corrupted, for the sake
Of singularity, disclaim'd that make;
Till they, disdaining Nature's vulgar mode,
Flew off, and struck into another road
More fitting quality: and to our view
Came forth a species altogether new,
Something we had not known, and could not know,
Like nothing of God's making here below. . .
Nature exclaim'd with wonder, *Lords are things,*
Which, never made by Me, were made by Kings!"

The same poem contains a full-length portrait of the poet, with the unscrupulous but lifelike mark of his own strong, coarse, unflattering hand; in which he laughs at himself as an "unlick'd" bear; depicts himself "rolling" in his walk, "much like a porpoise just before a storm;" plays in short the Hogarth to his own most ludicrous defects, and displays his ungainly foppery.

"Broad were his shoulders, and from blade to blade,
A H—— might at full length have laid;
Vast were his bones, his muscles twisted strong,
His face was short, but broader than 'twas long,
His features, though by nature they were large,
Contentment had contrived to overcharge
And bury meaning, save that we might spy
Sense lowering on the pent-house of his eye;
His arms were two twin oaks, his legs so stout,
That they might bear a mansion-house about,
Nor were they, look but at his body there,
Design'd by fate a much less weight to bear.
"O'er a brown cassock, which had once been black,
Which hung in tatters on his brawny back,
A sight most strange, and awkward to behold,
He threw a covering of blue and gold.

Just at that time of life, when man, by rule
The fop laid down, takes up the graver fool,
He started up a fop, and, fond of show,
Look'd like another Hercules turn'd beau.
A subject, met with only now and then,
Much fitter for the pencil than the pen;
Hogarth would draw him (Envy must allow)
E'en to the life, was Hogarth living now."

Hogarth *was* "living now," but, at the moment when the words were written, within view of his death-bed. Churchill little knew how nearly he approached his own; and yet, in the unfinished *Journey*, the last fragment found among his papers (for the severe and masterly *Dedication to Warburton*, though posthumously published, was of earlier date), there was a strange, half conscious, glimmering sense of the fate that now impended. The lamentations of his good-natured friends, that, but for his unhappy lust of publishing so fast, "he might have "flourish'd twenty years or more, Though now, alas! "poor man, *worn out in four*," were here noticed in some of his most vigorous verses. He proposes to take their advice, but finds the restraint too hard. Prose *will* run into verse. "If now and then I curse, my curses chime; "Nor can I pray, unless I pray in rhyme." He therefore entreats that they will once more be charitable even to his excesses, and read, "no easy task, *but probably the last* "*that I shall ask*," that little poem. He calls it the plain unlaboured Journey of a Day; warns off all who would resort to him for the stronger stimulants; exhorts the Muses, in some of his happiest satire, to divert themselves with contemporary poets in his absence; in that way, bids them their appetite for laughter feed; and closes with the line,

"I on my Journey all alone proceed!"

The poem was not meant to close here; but a Greater Hand interposed. That line of mournful significance is the last that was written by Churchill.

A sudden desire to see Wilkes took him hastily to

Boulogne on the 22nd of October 1764. "*Dear Jack*, "*adieu! C. C.*"—was the laconic announcement of his departure to his brother. At Boulogne, on the 29th of October, a miliary fever seized him, and baffled the physicians who were called in. The friends who surrounded his bed gave way to extreme distress: it was a moment when probably even Wilkes *felt:* but Churchill preserved his composure. He was described, afterwards, checking their agitated grief, in the lines with which he had calmly looked forward to this eventful time.

> "Let no unworthy sounds of grief be heard,
> No wild laments, not one unseemly word;
> Let sober triumphs wait upon my bier,
> I won't forgive that friend who sheds one tear.
> Whether he's ravish'd in life's early morn,
> Or, in old age, drops like an ear of corn,
> Full ripe he falls, on nature's noblest plan,
> Who lives to reason, and who dies a man."

He sat up in his bed, and dictated a brief, just will. He left his wife an annuity of 60*l*, and an annuity of 50*l* to the girl he had seduced. He provided for his two boys. He left mourning rings to Lord and Lady Temple, and to Wilkes, Lloyd, Cotes, Walsh, and the Duke of Grafton; and he desired his "dear friend, John Wilkes, "to collect and publish his works, with the remarks and "explanations he has prepared, and any others he thinks "proper to make." He then expressed a wish to be removed, that he might die in England; and the imprudent measures of his friends, in compliance with this wish, hastened the crisis. On the 4th of November 1764, at Boulogne, and in the thirty-third year of his age, Charles Churchill breathed his last.

Warburton said he had perished of a drunken debauch —a statement wholly untrue. Actor Davies said his last expression was "*What a fool I have been!*"—a statement contradicted by the tenor of his will, and specially denied by Wilkes. Garrick, who was in Paris at the time, wrote to Colman when their common friend had been six days

dead: "Churchill, I hear, is at the point of death at "Boulogne. I am sorry, very sorry for him. Such "talents, with prudence, had commanded the nation. I "have seen some extracts I don't admire."[1] What is not to be admired in a satirist, is generally discovered just before or just after his death; what is admired runs equal danger of unseasonable worship. There was a sale of his books and furniture, at which the most extravagant prices were given for articles of no value. A common steel-pen brought five pounds, and a pair of plated spurs sixteen guineas. The better to supply, too, the demands of public curiosity, vulgar letters were forged in his name; one of which was a few years since reproduced for his in the *Colman Correspondence*. A death-bed scene by the same busy scribe (in which the dying man was made to rave of his poor bleeding country, and of her true friend Mr. Pitt, and of Scotchmen preying upon her vitals, and of dying the death of the righteous), was also served up to edify the public and satisfy their inquiring interest.

[1] Two days after this date he wrote to his brother George, also from Paris, a letter which has not yet been published, and which one must sorrowfully confess bears out Foote's favourite jokes about his remarkably strong box, and his very keen regard for its contents. When he wrote to Colman he only knew that Churchill was dangerously ill; of the death he could not have heard till the day before, or the very day on which he wrote this letter, now to be published; yet the reader will perceive that it is certainly not the emotion of grief which he thinks primarily due to the memory of his friend:—"My dear George," he writes, "I have just time to send you "this scrap of a note by my friend "Mr. Burnett, a most sensible man, "and a great Scotch lawyer. I have "likewise sent the key of the table "in the study window, where I "believe is the key of the iron box. "I thought it might be necessary to "send you that, to look for Hubert's "bond, and a note of hand of "Churchill, who you know is dead. "Mr. Wilkes tells me there is money "enough for all his debts, and money "besides for his wife, Miss Carr "whom he liv'd with, &c. &c. You'll "do with both what is proper, but "put in your claim. Colman will "tell you where the money is. "Churchill, you'll see, paid me 40*l* "(I think) of the note—which is "either in the iron chest with the "rest, or in the table itself in the "study. Make use of the Florence "wine, or what else belongs to "your ever affectionate brother, D. "Garrick." The subject is again adverted to in another letter to his brother of eight days later date, still from Paris:—"I hope," he says, "you have received my key, and "done what is proper with regard to "the two debts of poor Hubert and "Churchill. Upon recollection, I "think, and am almost sure, that "Churchill gave me his bond. I "asked him for nothing—he was in "distress, and I assisted him."

"Churchill the poet is dead," wrote Walpole to Mann on the 15th of November. "The meteor blazed scarce four "years. He is dead, to the great joy of the Ministry and "the Scotch, and to the grief of very few indeed, I be- "lieve; for such a friend is not only a dangerous but a "ticklish possession."

There were friends who had not found him so. Lloyd was sitting down to dinner when the intelligence was brought to him. He was seized with a sudden sickness, and thrust away his plate untouched. "I shall follow "poor Charles," was all he said, as he went to the bed from which he never rose again. Churchill's favorite sister, Patty, said to have had no small share of his spirit, sense, and genius, and who was at this time betrothed to Lloyd, sank next under the double blow, and, in a few short weeks, joined her brother and her lover. The poet had asked that none should mourn for him, and here were two broken hearts offered up at his grave. Other silent and bitter sorrows were also there.

Wilkes professed unassuageable grief, and sacred intentions to fulfil the duty assigned him in the will. "I "will do it to the best of my poor abilities. My "life shall be dedicated to it. I am better," he exclaimed, a fortnight after the death, "but cannot "get any continued sleep. The idea of Churchill "is ever before my eyes." "Still I do not sleep," he wrote some weeks later; "Churchill is still be- "fore my eyes." Other expressions of his various letters run after the same fond fashion. "I believe I "shall never get quite over the late cruel blow." "Many "a sigh and tear escape me for the death of dear "Churchill." "You see how much I have at heart to "show the world how I loved Churchill." "I am adequate "to every affliction but the death of Churchill." "The "loss of Churchill I shall always reckon the most cruel "of all afflictions I have suffered." "I will soon convince "mankind that I know how to value such superior genius "and merit." "I have half finished the projected edition

" of dear Churchill." " How pleased is the dear shade of " our friend with all I have done!" In truth the dear shade could hardly be displeased, for all he had done was *nil*. He wrote a few paltry notes; and they came to nothing. But, a year after the sad scene at Boulogne, the Abbé Winckelman gave him an antique sepulchral urn of alabaster, and he placed on it a Latin inscription to his friend's memory; which he found himself sufficiently pleased with, to transfer afterwards to a Doric column in the grounds of his Isle of Wight cottage, erected of materials as fragile and as perishable as his patriotism. " Carolo Churchill, amico jucundo, poetæ acri, " civi optimè de patriâ merito, P. Johannes Wilkes, 1765." Horace has used the word *acer* in speaking of himself. Wilkes imperfectly understood its precise signification, or did not rightly understand the genius of his friend.

Meanwhile, in accordance with his own request, the body of Churchill had been brought over from France, and buried in the old churchyard which once belonged to the collegiate church of St. Martin at Dover. There is now a tablet to his memory in the church, and, over the place of burial, a stone inscribed with his name and age, the date of his death, and a line taken from that most manly and unaffected passage of his poetry, in which, without sorrow or complaining, he anticipates this humble grave.

" Let all (nor shall resentment flush my cheek)
Who know me well, what they know, freely speak,
So those (the greatest curse I meet below)
Who know me not, may not pretend to know.
Let none of those, whom, bless'd with parts above
My feeble genius, still I dare to love,
Doing more mischief than a thousand foes,
Posthumous nonsense to the world expose,
And call it mine, for mine though never known,
Or which, if mine, I living blush'd to own.
Know all the world, no greedy heir shall find,
Die when I will, one couplet left behind.
Let none of those, whom I despise though great,
Pretending friendship to give malice weight,

Publish my Life. Let no false sneaking Peer
(Some such there are) to win the public ear,
Hand me to shame with some vile anecdote,
Nor soul-gall'd Bishop damn me with a note.
Let one poor sprig of Bay around my head
Bloom whilst I live, and point me out when dead ;
Let It (may Heaven, indulgent, grant that prayer !)
Be planted on my grave, nor wither there ;
And when, on travel bound, some rhyming guest
Roams through the churchyard whilst his dinner's drest,
Let It hold up this comment to his eyes
Life to the last enjoy'd, Here Churchill lies ;
Whilst (O, what joy that pleasing flattery gives !)
Reading my Works, he cries, Here Churchill lives."

On "travel bound," a "rhyming guest" stood at the grave in the Dover churchyard, fifty years after this pathetic aspiration. He also had lived in defiance of the world's opinions, had written the most masterly satires, and had achieved a popularity unattained by any English poet since the grave at which he stood received its inhabitant; like him, too, he was then leaving his native country in early manhood, to be brought back dead; and the moral to which he shaped his thoughts was on "the "Glory and the Nothing of a Name." But a name is *not* an illusion, when it has been won by any strenuous exertion either of thought or action in an honest purpose. Time's purgatorial fire may weaken the strength of the characters it is written in, but it eats out of them also their mistakes and vices; and BYRON might have had greater hope for the living, and less pity for the dead, at the grave of CHARLES CHURCHILL.

SAMUEL FOOTE.[1]

1720—1777.

Les Excentriques et les Humoristes Anglais au Dixhuitième Siècle. Par M. PHILARÈTE CHASLES. Paris. 1848.

The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century. By W. M. THACKERAY. London, 1853.

Satire and Satirists. By JAMES HANNAY. London. 1854.

FEW things are in their nature so fleeting as a joker's reputation. Within a generation it lives and dies. The jest may survive, but the jester is forgotten, and it is wit that flies unclaimed of any man; or, more frequently, jest and jester both have passed away, and darkness has swallowed up the fireworks altogether. And this perhaps is better than to outlive liking, even in so trumpery a matter as a broad-grin. Horace Walpole has told us how much Lord Leicester suffered who had such a run in George I's reign, when, having retired for a few years, he returned to town with a new generation, recommenced his old routine, and was taken for a driveller; Swift had to remind Lord Chesterfield that Bussy Rabutin himself, when he was recalled to court after his long banishment, appeared ridiculous there; and one would not choose to have been that universally popular wit of the reign of Charles I, who, according to Sir William Temple, was found to be an intolerable bore at the court of Charles II.

But it is not simply that this kind of reputation has

[1] From the *Quarterly Review*, September 1854. With additions.

small value or duration in itself, but that it lowers any higher claim in its possessor. Laughter runs a losing race against the decencies and decorums; and even Swift, when he would have taken his proper place on the topmost round of the ladder, was tripped up by the *Tale of a Tub*. So much the weaker his chances, whose laughter has dealt with what partakes itself of the transitory; who has turned it against the accidents and follies of life; who has connected it with the obtrusive peculiarities of character, as much as with its substance and realities; and who must therefore look to be himself not always fairly associated with the trivialities he has singled out for scorn. In life, and in books, it is the same. It is wonderful how seldom men of great social repute have been permitted to enjoy any other; and there is written wisdom of old date to this day unappreciated, because of the laughing and light exterior it presents to us. In an age which may not unjustly be characterised as one of little wit and perpetual joking, this is a fault which has not much chance of remedy.

Of the three books whose title-pages are transcribed at the head of this essay, the reader may candidly be told that it is not our intention to say anything. What we are going to write is suggested by what we have *not* found in them. In the first, an ingenious Frenchman, and noted Anglo-maniac, reveals the discoveries he has made of eccentric Englishmen, from Swift to Charles Lamb. In the second, a contemporary English wit and humourist, himself of no small distinction, eloquently discourses of his illustrious predecessors from Addison to Goldsmith, and passes upon them some hasty and many subtle sentences. In the third, a young and most deserving writer, whose cleverness and knowledge would be not less relished if a little less familiar and self-satisfied in tone, takes in hand the whole subject of Satire and Satirists, dismisses Q. Horatius Flaccus with the same easy decision as Mr. Punch, and is as much at home with Juvenal and George Buchanan as with Thomas Moore and Theodore Hook. Yet in these three successive volumes-full of

English heroes of eccentricity, humour, and satire, there is One name altogether omitted which might have stood as the type of all; being that of an Englishman as eccentric, humorous, and satirical as any this nation has bred. To the absent figure in the procession, therefore, we are about to turn aside to offer tribute. We propose to speak of that forgotten name; and to show its claims to have been remembered, even though it now be little more than a name.

It was once both a terrible and a delightful reality. It expressed a bitterness of sarcasm and ridicule unexampled in England; and a vivacity, intelligence, and gaiety, a ready and unfailing humour, to which a parallel could scarcely be found among the choicest wits of France. It was the name of a man so popular and diffused, that it would be difficult to say to what class of his countrymen he gave the greatest amount of amusement; it was the name of a man also more dreaded, than any since his who laid the princes of Europe under terror-stricken contribution, and to whom the Great Turk himself offered hush-money. "Mr. Foote was a man of wonderful abilities," says Garrick, "and the most entertaining companion I "have ever known." "There is hardly a public man in "England," says Davies, "who has not entered Mr. "Foote's theatre with an aching heart, under the appre- "hension of seeing himself laughed at." "Sure if ever "one person," says Tate Wilkinson, "possessed the "talents of pleasing more than another, Mr. Foote was "the man." "Upon my word," writes Horace Walpole, "if Mr. Foote be not check'd, we shall have the army "itself, on its return from Boston, besieged in the Hay- "market." Such and so various were the emotions once inspired by him who has now lost command alike over our fears and our enjoyments; and whose name is not thought even worthy of mention, by lecturers aiming to be popular, among the Humourists and Satirists of the eighteenth century.

We have hinted at one reason for such forgetfulness,

but that is not all. He who merely shoots a folly as it flies, may have no right to outlive the folly he lays low; but Foote's aim was not so limited. He proposed to instruct, as well as to amuse, his countrymen; he wrote what he believed to be comedies, as well as what he knew to be farces; he laughed freely at what he thought ridiculous in others, but he aspired also to produce what should be admirable and enduring of his own. "My "scenes," he said on one occasion, "have been collected "from general nature, and are applicable to none but "those who, through consciousness, are compelled to a "self-application. To that mark, if Comedy directs not "her aim, her arrows are shot in the air; for by what "touches no man, no man will be amended." This plea has not been admitted, however. Whenever Foote is now named, it is as a satirist of peculiarities, not as an observer of character; it is as a writer whose reputation has perished, with the personalities that alone gave it zest; it is as a comedian who so exclusively addressed himself to the audience of his theatre, that posterity has been obliged to decline having any business or concern with him.

Smarting from some ridicule poured out at his dinner-table, Boswell complained to Johnson that the host had made fools of his guests, and was met by a sarcasm bitter as Foote's own. "Why, Sir, when you go to see Foote, "you do not go to see a saint; you go to see a man who "will be entertained at your house, and then bring you on "a public stage; who will entertain you at his house, for "the very purpose of bringing you on a public stage. "Sir, he does not make fools of his company; they whom "he exposes are fools already; he only brings them into "action." The same opinion he expressed more gravely in another conversation, when, admitting Foote's humour, and his singular talent for exhibiting character, he qualified it not as a talent but a vice, such as other men abstain from;[1] and described it to be not comedy, which exhibits

[1] Yet even Johnson could admit that there were cases where he would have relaxed his own rule, and rejoiced to see administered, even upon

the character of a species, but farce, which exhibits individuals. Be this hasty or deliberate, false or true, the imputation conveyed by it follows Foote still, and gathers bulk as it rolls. When Sir Walter Scott speaks of him, it is as an unprincipled satirist, who, while he affected to be the terror of vice and folly, was only anxious to extort forbearance-money from the timid, or to fill his theatre at the indiscriminate expense of friends and enemies, virtuous or vicious, who presented foibles capable of being turned into ridicule. When Mr. Macaulay speaks of him, it is as a man whose mimickry was exquisitely ludicrous, but all caricature; and who could take off only some strange peculiarity, a stammer or a lisp, a Northumbrian burr or an Irish brogue, a stoop or a shuffle. If we had absolute faith in any of these judgments, this essay would not have been attempted.

A careful examination of Foote's writings has satisfied us that they are not unworthy of a very high place in literature, though not perhaps in all respects the place he would have claimed; and it is worth remark that in defending them he has himself anticipated Mr. Macaulay's illustration. He declines to introduce upon the scene a lady from the north, with the true Newcastle burr in her throat; he recognises no subject for ridicule in the accidental unhappiness of a national brogue, for which a man is no more to be held accountable than for the colour of his hair: but he sees the true object and occasion for satire where all true satirists have found it, namely, in all kinds of affectation or pretence; in whatever assumes to be what it is not, or strives to be what it cannot become. That he did not uniformly remember this, is with regret to be admitted, seeing the effect it has had upon his reputation; but it is not in his writings that his most marked deviations from it are discoverable. For it is not because real

individuals, the lash which Foote wielded with such effect. "Sir, I "wish he had him," he said to Boswell, who had named a miserly acquaintance of theirs as a capital subject for Foote. "I, who have "eaten his bread, will not give him "to him, but I should be glad he "came honestly by him."

characters are there occasionally introduced, that the verdict is at once to pass against him. Vanbrugh's Miss Jenny, was a certain Derbyshire Miss Lowe; Cibber's Lady Grace, was Lady Betty Cecil; Farquhar's Justice Balance, was a well-known Mr. Beverley; and Molière, who struck the fashions and humours of his age into forms that are immortal, has perpetuated with them the vices and foibles of many a living contemporary. In all these cases, the question still remains whether the individual folly or vice, obtruding itself on the public, may not so far represent a general defect, as to justify public satire for the sake of the warning it more widely conveys. It will not do to confine ridicule exclusively to folly and vice, and to refrain, in case of need, from laying its lash on the knave and the fool. But such reasonable opportunities are extremely rare; and it even more rarely happens that what is thus strictly personal in satire, does not also involve individual injustice and wrong. It is, beyond doubt, no small ground for distrust of its virtues, that the public should be always so eager to welcome it. No one has expressed this more happily than Foote himself, when, levelling his blow at Churchill, he makes his publisher Mr. Puff object to a poem full of praise:

"Why, who the devil will give money to be told that Mr. Such-
"a-one is a wiser or better man than himself? No, no; 'tis quite
"and clean out of nature. A good sousing satire, now, well-
"powdered with personal pepper, and seasoned with the spirit of
"party, that demolishes a conspicuous character, and sinks him
"below our own level—*there*, *there*, we are pleased; there we
"chuckle and grin, and toss the half-crown on the counter."

Unhappily this was his own case not less; for he, too, had to provide pleasure for those who went to chuckle, and grin, and toss their half-crowns at the pay-place of the Haymarket. And it was in serving-up the dish for this purpose, rather than in first preparing it; it was in the powdering and peppering for the table, rather than in the composition and cooking; in a word, it was less by

the deliberate intention of the writer than by the ready mimickry and humorous impromptu of the actor, that Foote gave mortal offence to so many of his countrymen, did irreparable wrong very often to the least offending, began himself to pay the penalty in suffering before he died, and is paying the penalty still in character and fame.

It is this which explains any difference to be noted between the claims put forth by himself, and the verdict recorded by his contemporaries. The writings we shall shortly introduce to the reader would little avail, in themselves, to account for the mixed emotions they inspired. That which gave them terror, has of course long departed from them; but by reviving so much of it as description may tamely exhibit, and by connecting with Foote's personal career some idea of the overflowing abundance and extravagance of his humour, it is possible that their laughter and wit may win back some part of the appreciation they have lost, and a fair explanation be supplied not only of the genius of this remarkable man, and of the peculiar influence he exerted while he lived, but of the causes which have intercepted his due possession and ungrudged enjoyment of the

"Estate that wits inherit after death."

The strength and predominance of Foote's humour lay in its readiness. Whatever the call that might be made upon it, there it was. Other men were humorous as the occasion arose to them, but to him the occasion was never wanting. Others might be foiled or disabled by the lucky stroke of an adversary, but he took only the quicker rebound from what would have laid them prostrate. To put him out, or place him at a disadvantage, was not possible. He was taken one day into White's Club, by a friend who wanted to write a note. Standing in a room among strangers, and men he had no agreement with in politics, he appeared to feel not quite at ease: when Lord Carmarthen, wishing to relieve his embarrassment, went

up to speak to him; but, himself feeling rather shy, merely said, "Mr. Foote, your handkerchief is hanging "out of your pocket." Whereupon Foote, looking round suspiciously, and hurriedly thrusting the handkerchief back into his pocket, replied, "Thank you, my Lord, "thank you; you know the company better than I do."—At one of Macklin's absurd Lectures on the Ancients, the lecturer was solemnly composing himself to begin when a buz of laughter from where Foote stood ran through the room, and Macklin, thinking to throw the laugher off his guard, and effectually for that night disarm his ridicule, turned to him with this question, in his most severe and pompous manner. "Well, Sir, you seem to "be very merry there, but do you know what I am going "to say, now?" "No, Sir," at once replied Foote; "*pray*, "*do you?*"—One night at his friend Delaval's, when the glass had been circulating freely, one of the party would suddenly have fixed a quarrel upon him for his indulgence of personal satire. "Why, what would you have?" exclaimed Foote, good-humouredly putting it aside; "of "course I take all my friends off, but I use them no worse "than myself, I take *myself* off." "Gadso!" cried the malcontent, "that I should like to see:" upon which Foote took up his hat and left the room.

No one could so promptly overthrow an assailant; so quietly rebuke an avarice or meanness; so effectually "abate and dissolve" any ignorant affectation or pretension. "Why do you attack my weakest part?" he asked, of one who had raised a laugh against what Johnson calls his *depeditation*: "did I ever say anything about your "head?"—Dining when in Paris with Lord Stormont, that thrifty Scotch peer, then ambassador, as usual produced his wine in the smallest of decanters and dispensed it in the smallest of glasses, enlarging all the time on its exquisite growth and enormous age. "It is very little of "its age," said Foote, holding up his diminutive glass.—A pompous person who had made a large fortune as a builder was holding forth on the mutability of the world.

"Can you account for it, Sir?" said he, turning to Foote. "Why, not very clearly, Sir," said Foote; "unless we "could suppose the world was built by contract."—A stately and silly country squire was regaling a large party with the number of fashionable folk he had visited that morning. "And among the rest," he said, "I called upon "my good friend the Earl of Chol-mon-dely, but he was "not at home." "That is exceedingly surprising," said Foote. "What! nor none of his pe-o-ple?"—Being in company where Hugh Kelly was mightily boasting of the power he had as a reviewer of distributing literary reputation to any extent, "Don't be too prodigal of it," Foote quietly interposed, "or you may leave none for yourself."—Conversation turning one day on a lady having married very happily, whose previous life had been of extremely doubtful complexion, some one attributed the unexpected result to her having frankly told her husband, before marriage, *all* that had happened. "What candour she "must have had!" was the general remark upon this. "What honesty!" "Yes," said Foote, "and what an "amazing memory!"—The then Duke of Cumberland (the *foolish* Duke, as he was called) came one night into the green-room at the Haymarket Theatre. "Well, Foote," said he, "here I am, ready, as usual, to swallow all your "good things." "Really," replied Foote, "your royal "highness must have an excellent digestion, for you never "bring any up again."—"Why are you for ever humming "that air?" he asked a man without a sense of tune in him. "Because it haunts me." "No wonder," said Foote: "you are for ever murdering it."—A well beneficed old Cornish parson was holding forth at the dinner-table upon the surprising profits of his living, much to the weariness of everyone present, when, happening to stretch over the table hands remarkable for their dirt, Foote struck in with, "Well, Doctor, I for one am not at all "surprised at your profits, for I see you keep the glebe "in your own hands."—One of Mrs. Montagu's blue-stocking ladies fastened upon him at one of the routs in

Portman-square with her views of *Locke on the Understanding*, which she protested she admired above all things; only there was one particular word very often repeated which she could not distinctly make out, and that was the word (pronouncing it very long) "*ide-a;* but "I suppose it comes from a Greek derivation." "You "are perfectly right, Madam," said Foote; "it comes "from the word *ideaowski.*" "And pray, Sir, what does "that mean?" "The feminine of idiot, Madam."—Much bored by a pompous physician at Bath, who confided to him as a great secret that he had a mind to publish his own poems, but had so many irons in the fire he really did not well know what to do. "Take my advice, Doctor," says Foote, "and put your poems where your irons are."—Not less distressed on another occasion by a mercantile man of his acquaintance, who had also not only written a poem, but exacted a promise that he would listen to it, and who mercilessly stopped to tax him with inattention even before advancing beyond the first pompous line, "*Hear me, O Phœbus, and ye Muses nine!* pray, pray be "attentive, Mr. Foote." "I am," said Foote; "nine and "one are ten; go on!"

The only men of his day, putting aside Johnson's later fame, who had the least pretension to compare with him in social repute, were Quin for wit and Garrick for powers of conversation. But Quin was restricted to particular walks of humour; and his jokes, though among the most masterly in the language, had undoubtedly a certain strong, morose, surly vein, like the characters he was so great in. Foote's range, on the other hand, was as universal as society and scholarship could make it; and Davies, who was no great friend of his, says it would have been much more unfashionable not to have laughed at Foote's jokes, than even at Quin's. Garrick again, though nothing could be more delightful than the gaiety of his talk, had yet to struggle always with a certain restless misgiving, which made him the sport of men who were much his inferiors. Johnson puts the matter kindly.

"Garrick, Sir, has some delicacy of feeling; it is possible to "put him out; you may get the better of him: but Foote is the "most incompressible fellow that I ever knew; when you have "driven him into a corner, and think you are sure of him, he runs "through between your legs, or jumps over your head, and makes "his escape."

Could familiar language describe Falstaff better than this, which hits off the character of Foote's humour exactly? It was incompressible. No matter what the truth of any subject might be, or however strong the position of any adversary, he managed to get the laugh on his own side. It was not merely a quickness of fancy, a brilliance of witty resource, a ready and expert audacity of invention; but that there was a fulness and invincibility of *courage* in the man, call it moral or immoral, which unfailingly warded off humiliation. In another form the same remark was made on another occasion by Johnson, when some one in his company insisted that Foote was a mere buffoon and merry-andrew, and the conscientious Samuel interposed of his less conscientious namesake:

"But he has wit, too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility "and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading; he has "knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has "in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner "with both hands; but he's gone, Sir, when you think you have "got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he "has a great range for wit; he never lets truth stand between him "and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse."

A position of greater temptation is hardly conceivable than that of a man gifted with such powers, and free from such restraints; and the outline we now propose to give of his career will best show, on the one hand, to what extent he was able to resist the temptation, and, on the other, to what extent he fell. Johnson admits, while certainly he underrates, his scholarship; and detects, though he exaggerates, his chief moral defect; but he also asserts, what the contradictory testimony of too many witnesses forbids us to believe, that he was not a good

mimic. He seems on the contrary to have carried mimickry much higher than its ordinary strain, by combining with it a comic genius and invention peculiar to himself. It is seldom that a mere mimic is so extraordinarily endowed. This gave him the range of character as well as of manners, in the perception and appropriation of what was ludicrous; and it put a surprising vitality into his satire.

It was at the same time that dangerous facility and force of imitation, which, in connexion with the exuberance of his humour, most limited his power of resisting its indulgence. None better than himself knew the disadvantage, in a moral sense, at which it often placed him, compared with duller men; and there is affecting significance in his remark to young O'Keefe, "Take care of "your wit," he said; "bottle up your wit." In the sketch we are about to attempt, not a few indications will appear that Foote, often as he subjected himself to the charge of cruelty and inhumanity, had certainly not a malignant disposition. But in his case we shall do well to remember what Halifax said of Bishop Burnet, that our nature scarcely allows us to be well supplied with anything, without our having too much of it; and that it is hard for a vessel which is brimful, when in motion not to run over. The habit of jesting and contempt, and of looking always at the ludicrous and sarcastic side, got the mastery over Foote. It became a tyranny from which there was no escape; and its practice was far more frequent, and its application more wide, than even such potency of humour as his could justify, or render other than hurtful and degrading to his own nature.

Perhaps the most startling introduction upon record to a club of wits, is that for which Foote, when a youth of one-and-twenty, had to thank the Mr. Cooke who translated Hesiod. "This," said Mr. Cooke, presenting his protégé, "is the nephew of the gentleman who was lately "hung in chains for murdering his brother." Startling as the statement was, however, it was quite true; and it

is probable that Mr. Cooke, who had an ingenious turn for living in idleness by his wits, and was reported to have subsisted for twenty years on a translation of Plautus for which he was always taking subscriptions, thought of nothing in making it but his young friend's luck and advantage, in having come to a considerable fortune by such windfalls as a murder and an execution. Such was actually the case; and the eccentric translator was now helping him to spend this fortune, by making him known at his favourite club.

Samuel Foote, born at Truro in 1720, came of what in courtesy must be called a good family, notwithstanding the alarming fact just mentioned. His father had some time sat in parliament as member for Tiverton; and in 1720 was an active Cornish magistrate and influential country gentleman, receiver of fines for the duchy, and a joint commissioner of the Prize-office. His mother[1] was

[1] She survived till she was 84. She lived to see the triumphs of her son, and was spared the knowledge of his suffering. She died shortly before the affair of the Duchess of Kingston, when Foote, as will be seen hereafter, defended her memory with affection and spirit. When she was 79 years old, Cooke dined with her in company with her granddaughter, at a barrister's in Gray's Inn, and, though she had sixty steps to ascend to the drawing-room, she did it without the help of a cane, and with the activity of a woman of forty. Her talk, too, surprised every one. It was witty, humorous, and convivial, and made her the heroine of the party. She had the figure and face of her son, with the same continual mirth and good humour in the eye.

It may be worth adding, that, in the famous reply to the Duchess of Kingston just referred to (and which will be found printed at length in a later note), Foote gives a curious proof of the haste with which he must have read, and read only once, the savage assault he was answering. The truth is that the Duchess threw out no imputation against his mother beyond the preposterous assertion that she was the daughter of a merry-andrew who exhibited at Totness. The passage runs thus: "To a man, "my sex alone would have screened "me from attack—but I am writing "to the descendant of a merry-an-"drew and prostitute the term of "manhood by applying it to Mr. "Foote." To which Foote, catching simply the connection without the sense of the words (unless we are to assume that he made the mistake deliberately for the sake of the opportunity it gave him), made reply: "The progenitors your Grace has "done me the honour to give me, "are, I presume, merely metaphysical "persons, and to be considered as "the authors of my muse, and not my "manhood: a merry-andrew and a "prostitute are no bad poetical "parents, especially for a writer of "plays; the first to give the humour "and mirth, the last to furnish the "graces and powers of attraction. . . "If you mean that I really owe my

the daughter of a baronet, Sir Edward Goodere, who represented the county of Hereford for many years; and who, by marriage with the granddaughter of the Earl of Rutland, had connected with his own family the not less ancient stock of the Dineleys, of Charlton in Worcestershire. This connection placed young Sam in the collegiate school at Worcester, from which, as founder's kin, he was in his seventeenth year elected scholar of Worcester-college in Oxford. Being a quick clever lad, he was a favourite with the master, Dr. Miles, and already report had gone abroad of an astonishing faculty of humour in him. His schoolfellows putting him first in all pranks against authority, he had become supreme in barrings-out, artificial earthquakes, and other strokes of juvenile wit; but what thus early drew more attention to him was his mimickry of grown-up people, his unusual talent for making fun of his elders and superiors. Arthur Murphy, on whom Johnson so repeatedly urged the duty of writing some account of him that he began to collect materials for it, found upon inquiry a tradition remaining in the school that the boys often suffered on a Monday for preferring Sam's laughter to their lessons; for, when-

"birth to that pleasant connection, "your Grace is grossly deceived. My "father was, in truth, a very useful "magistrate and respectable country "gentleman, as the whole county of "Cornwall will tell you. My mother, "&c. &c." The entire correspondence is printed by Cooke, vol. i. p. 200-210.

I subjoin an extract of a letter from Miss Mary Harness to Dr. Harness, dated Truro, Sept. 19, 1797, with which I have been favoured by my friend the Rev. William Harness, and which shows Foote's connexion with some of the old West of England families. "Our great grandmother "Foote was a Miss Stephens of "Truro. She had eight children, two "sons and six daughters.

"The eldest son married Miss "Gregor, great aunt to the present "member for Cornwall.

"The second (Samuel Foote's "father) married the only daughter "of Sir Thomas Dinely Goodier, "Bart.

"The eldest daughter married "Harris of Hayne, in the parish of "Stowford, the living of which is "held at present by our cousin "Samuel Harness.

"The second married Nicholls of "Trewe, father of Dr. Nicholls, whom "you may remember Professor of "Anatomy in the University of Ox-"ford.

"The third married Willyams of "Truro.

"The fourth, Pendarvis of Pendar-"vis.

"The fifth, Thomas of Tregols.

"The sixth, our grandfather."

ever he had dined on the Sunday with any of his relatives, his jokes and imitations next day at the expense of the family entertaining him had all the fascination of a stage play. Murphy adds his belief that he acted Punch in disguise during his student career at Oxford.

He certainly acted, without disguise, many kinds of extravagance there, of which the principal drift was to turn the laugh, when he could, against the provost of his college, with of course the unavoidable result of penalties and impositions, which became themselves but the occasion afterwards for a new and broader laugh. Provost Gower was a pedant of the most uncompromising school, and Foote would present himself to receive his reprimand with great apparent gravity and submission, but with a large dictionary under his arm; when, on the Doctor beginning in his usual pompous manner with a surprisingly long word, he would immediately interrupt him, and, after begging pardon with great formality, would produce his dictionary, and pretending to find the meaning of the word would say "Very well, sir; now please to go "on." It is clear, however, that under no extent of laxity of discipline could this be expected to go on: and accordingly we find him, in the third year of his under-graduateship, after an interval of gaiety at Bath, flaming suddenly through Oxford in society not very worshipful, attended by two footmen, and with a ridiculous quantity of lace about his clothes; taken to task more gravely than usual for so marked an indecorum; and quitting college in consequence, in 1740, "but without "any public censure."

That he quitted it, in spite of all these follies, with a very respectable amount of scholarship, there can be no question; and this he now carried up to London, entering himself of the Temple. It had been settled that the law was to be the making of his fortune, ever since a scene of mimickry at his father's dinner-table some four years before this date, long remembered and related by his mother, when he had taken measure of the judicial

wit of no less than three justices of quorum in an imaginary affiliation case. He contrasted, with great fun, the irascible bad English of Justice D, with the mild placidity of Justice A's slips of grammar, and he wound up with a picture of Justice F (his father) having something to say on both sides, like Sir Roger de Coverley, which he reproduced with such infinite humour of resemblance, even to the accompaniment of a twirling of his father's magisterial thumbs, that everybody present was in ecstacy. Nevertheless it did not prefigure the woolsack, all that ensued to him from a nearer acquaintauce with the law being greater facilities for laughing at it. But it is difficult to say what effect the tragedy of his uncles may have had on the outset of his studies. Hardly had he begun residence in the Temple, when this frightful catastrophe became the talk of the town.

A family quarrel of long standing existed between these two brothers of Mrs. Foote (Sir John Dineley Goodere, and Capt. Samuel Goodere, RN), and it had very recently assumed a character of such bitterness, that the baronet, who was unmarried and somewhat eccentric in his ways, had cut off the entail of the family estate in favour of his sister's issue, to the exclusion of the Captain, who nevertheless had seized the occasion of an unexpected visit of his brother to Bristol, in the winter of 1741, somewhat ostentatiously to seek a reconciliation with him; having previously arranged that on the very night of their friendly meeting a pressgang, partly selected from his own ship, the Ruby man-of-war, and partly from the Vernon privateer, both lying at the time in the King's-road, should seize and hurry Sir John into a boat on the river, and thence secrete him in the purser's cabin of the Ruby. The whole thing was wonderfully devised to assume the character of one of the outrages far from uncommon in seaports in those days; but as usual the artifice was overdone. The Captain's publicly-acted reconciliation directed suspicion against him; even among the savage instruments of his dreadful deed, some sparks of feeling and

conscience were struck out; and one man, who saw through a crevice in the woodwork of the cabin two of the worst ruffians in the ship strangle the poor struggling victim, swore also, in confirmation of the evidence of others who had witnessed their commander's watch outside the door at the supposed time of the murder and his subsequent sudden disappearance inside, that in about a minute after the deed was done he saw an arm stretched out, and *a white hand* on the throat of the deceased.

Captain Goodere would have defended himself by the plea that he had no part in the murder, and that his share in the seizure of his brother was only to withdraw him from improper influences until a settlement could be had of the question whether or not his eccentricities should be held to render him incapable of disposing of his property; the friends of the murderer on the other hand would have defended *him* on the plea, that the act, if he had indeed committed it, was not that of a person in his senses. But as occasional eccentricities are no definition of perfect madness, so neither can any murderer be considered so perfectly sane as to be entitled to escape responsibility on proof that he may sometimes have lost self-command.[1] Captain Goodere, therefore, was duly and deservedly hanged; and a portion of the family inheritance came to young Sam Foote; and Mr. Hesiod Cooke took him to his club, as already we have faithfully recorded.

Those were still great days for clubs and taverns. The Grecian, in Devereux-court, continued to retain some portion of the fame for Temple wit which made Steele propose to date from it his learned papers in the *Tatler*, and here was Foote's morning lounge; while in the evening he sought the Bedford in Covent-garden, which had succeeded lately to the theatrical glories of Tom's and Will's, and where, to be one of the knot of well-

[1] This detestable doctrine, which will always have its advocates, nor ever want the sapient sanction of British jurymen, was most offensive to the manly and robust sense of Doctor Johnson. "He was," says Sir John Hawkins, "a great enemy to "the present fashionable way of sup- "posing worthless and infamous per- "sons mad."

dressed people that met there and modestly called themselves the world, was of course a natural object of youthful aspiration. For the vicinity of the theatre was even yet the head-quarters of wit; and still the ingenious apophthegm of Steele's passed current, that what the bank was to the credit of the nation the playhouse was to its politeness and good manners. Here accordingly breaks upon us the first clear glimpse of our hero. A well-known physician and theatrical critic of the day, Dr. Barrowby, sketches him for us. One evening, he says, he saw a young man extravagantly dressed out in a frock suit of green and silver lace, bag-wig, sword, bouquet, and point-ruffles, enter the room, and immediately join the critical circle at the upper end. Nobody recognised him; but such was the ease of his bearing, and the point and humour of remark with which he at once took part in the conversation, that his presence seemed to disconcert no. one; and a sort of pleased buz of "*Who is* "*he?*" was still going round the room unanswered, when a handsome carriage stopped at the door, he rose and quitted the room, and the servants announced that his name was Foote, that he was a young gentleman of family and fortune, a student of the Inner Temple, and that the carriage had called for him on its way to the assembly of a lady of fashion.

Any more definite notion of his pursuits within the next two years we fail to get, but that he underwent some startling vicissitudes is certain. There are traces of him among other than ladies of fashion; and the scandal attaches to him of having driven a coach and six greys into Oxford, accompanied as even Oxford, though anything but strait-laced in those days, was fain to take mighty offence at. For some months of the time he appears to have rented Charlton-house, once the family seat in Worcestershire; and here there is a pleasant story told of his having his former schoolmaster Doctor Miles to dine with him amidst his magnificence, when the unworldly old pedagogue, amazed at the splendour,

innocently asked his quondam pupil how much it might cost, and got for answer that he did not then know how much it might cost, but certainly *should* know how much it would bring. And doubtless this anticipation came very suddenly true: for an old schoolfellow told Murphy that he remembered dining with him in the Fleet within the same year, in company with a man named Waite, confined there for a fraudulent debt to the bank; when, Waite having supplied the turbot, venison, and claret for the feast, and young Foote the wit, humour, and jollity, never did he pass so cheerful a day. Murphy adds the surprising fact that his first essay as an author was written at about this time, and that it was "a pamphlet "giving an account of one of his uncles who was executed "for murdering his other uncle."

We have made unavailing search for this pamphlet, any account of which at second hand it is manifestly dangerous to take. But by those who profess to have seen it, it is represented to have been a quasi-defence of the justly-hanged captain; a sort of "putting the best face" on the family discredit; though in what way this too-partial nephew could possibly prove that the one uncle did not deserve strangling publicly, without at the same time making it clear that the other uncle *did* deserve strangling privately, we are quite at a loss to comprehend. That he wrote some such pamphlet, however, seems certain, urged to it by hunger and the ten pounds of an Old Bailey bookseller; the subject continuing to occupy all the gossips and horror-mongers about town, the nephew being supposed to know more of "the rights of it" than anybody else, and the condition of the publication being the suppression of his name as its writer.[1] Such certainly was

[1] What purports to be a copy of this pamphlet has since been sent to me. It is the recent reprint of a common and coarsely printed sixpenny tract, published in the locality of the murder, consisting of an abstract of the evidence with prefatory comments on its tragical incidents, such as one might expect to find commanding still its local sale on market days, as the record and celebration of one of the legitimate points of interest of the neighbourhood. It is said on the title page to have been written

the extremity of his need at the moment, that on the day he took his manuscript to its very proper destination at the Old Bailey, "he was," says Cooke, "actually obliged "to wear his boots without stockings, and on his receiv- "ing his ten pounds he stopped at a hosier's in Fleet- "street to remedy that defect;" but hardly had he issued from the shop when two old Oxford associates, who had arrived in London on a frolic, recognised him and bore him off to dinner at the Bedford; where, as the glass began to circulate, the state of his wardrobe came within view, and he was asked what the deuce had become of his stockings? "Why," said Foote, quite unembarrassed, "I never wear any at this time of the year, till I am going "to dress for the evening; and you see," pulling his purchase out of his pocket, and silencing the laugh and the suspicion of his friends, "I am always provided with a "pair for the occasion."

This anecdote rests on the authority of Mr. William Cooke, commonly called Conversation Cooke, who put together, half a century since, for Sir Richard Phillips's book-mart, a memoir of Foote not without many points of merit, though discrimination is not one of them; and who, with Murphy, fixes the date of the pamphlet at the period when its author, "immersed in all the expensive follies "of the times, had just outrun his first fortune." His second fortune is supposed to have fallen to him on his father's death; but the dates and circumstances are not at all clear, and Mr. Cooke further confuses them by the

"by the *late* S. Foote, Esq," but bears about it no other evidence of his authorship, unless a cursory allusion in the body of it to the writer's relationship to the two brothers may be accepted as such. If this, however, be really the pamphlet referred to in the text, the allusions there made are not quite accurate, for it certainly does not endeavour to defend both brothers. It gives up the captain; and, though by no means anxious to cloak the failings of Sir John, shows an undisguised leaning to him. Still, if it could be shown to be genuine, it would be perhaps the most amazing specimen on record of nonchalance in treating publicly of a topic that would surely have been gall and wormwood to most men whom it personally touched. But it is extremely difficult to believe in the alleged authorship, or that the very hastiest and most negligent performance of such a man as Foote, upon such a subject, could have been so utterly poor and impotent as the tract I have been describing.

statement that the worthy old magistrate, shortly before he died, had sanctioned his son's marriage with a young Worcestershire lady, and received them in Cornwall for the honeymoon; when, on their arrival one dreary January night, a serenade was heard which no one next morning could account for, and, the moment being carefully noted by Foote, it turned out afterwards to be exactly that of the consummation of the frightful tragedy at Bristol. "Foote always asserted the fact of this occurrence," says Cooke, "with a most striking gravity of belief, though he "could by no means account for it." It may have been so, but the alleged marriage is equally difficult to account for, and would seem indeed to rest on no sufficient authority. No traces of any such settled connection are discoverable in Foote's career. The two sons that were born to him, were not born in wedlock; and when the maturer part of his life arrived, and the titled and wealthy crowded to his table, his home had never any recognised mistress. Indeed he used wittily to give as his laughing excuse for bachelorhood, that you must count a lady's age as you do a hand at picquet, twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight, twenty-nine, *sixty;* and he had no ambition to awake one morning, and find himself matched so unequally for the whole length of a life.

But confused as are some of the dates and details at the outset of his career, the main particulars may be given with reasonable confidence; and the second fortune which undoubtedly he inherited, he had as certainly spent before he was twenty-four years old. The thing was then easily to be done by a hand or two at hazard. In 1742 and '43 he topped the part of a fine gentleman upon town; dressing it to such perfection, in morning and evening equipment, and giving such a grace to his bag-wig and solitaire, his sword, muff, and rings, that he received the frequent compliment of being taken for a foreigner. At the opening of 1744, however, the scene had again changed with him; and if we look in at the Bedford we shall find him once more among the wits and critics there, with as much

sore necessity to live by his wits as they. And we may note there also, as one other accession its circle has just received, a manly-looking youth of pleasant aspect, with the same weakness for fine clothes as Foote himself, but with something in his face and eyes that tells of other and higher aspirations. It is poor Collins,[1] hardly twenty-one, bent upon earning a subsistence by writing Odes, which one day he writes and the next he burns, fretting out the best part of his brief sad life, and wasting in profitless vexations what might have made him one of the greatest of English poets. In this second clearly discernible appearance of our hero, Doctor Barrowby reappears also; and Foote for once has the laugh turned somewhat against him. A remnant of his newly-wasted fortune is clinging to him still in the shape of a gold repeater, in those times something of a rarity, which he ostentatiously parades with the surprised remark, "Why, "my watch does not go!" "It soon *will* go," quietly says Doctor Barrowby.

Since we last looked in at the Bedford, the theatres

[1] "When Mr. William Collins came "from the university, he called on "his cousin Payne, gaily dressed, and "with a feather in his hat; at which "his relation expressed surprize, and "told him his appearance was by no "means that of a young man who had "not a single guinea he could call his "own. . . To raise a present subsis-"tence he set about writing his Odes. ". . . when, pretending he would "alter them, he got them from me, "and threw them into the fire. He "was an acceptable companion every-"where; and among the gentlemen "who loved him for a genius, I may "reckon the Doctors Armstrong, "Barrowby, and Hill, Messrs. Quin, "Garrick, and Foote . . . He was "particularly noticed by the geniuses "who frequented the Bedford and "Slaughter's Coffee-houses." Letter of Mr. Ragsdale (July 1783) reprinted in the *Monthly Magazine*, vol. xxi. A writer, now known to have been Gilbert White of Selborne, had written a somewhat similar account to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1781. "Going to London from Oxford, he "commenced a man of the town, "spending his time in all the dissi-"pation of Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and "the Playhouses; and was romantic "enough to suppose that his superior "abilities would draw the attention "of the great world, by means of "whom he was to make his fortune.. "I met him often, and remember "he lodged in a little house with a "Miss Bundy, at the corner of King's-"square-court, Soho, now a ware-"house." Let me direct the reader to an edition just published (1858) of this most charming poet, admirably edited, and with an agreeable and interesting Memoir by Mr. Moy Thomas. It is among the new editions of the "Aldine Poets" at present in course of careful reproduction by Messrs. Bell and Daldy.

have taken new importance, and the critics found fresh employment, in a stage-success, without parallel within living recollection. When Foote went first to that coffee-house, one of its habitués was a lively little man who supplied it with "red port;" with whom he formed an acquaintance; whom he then described living in Durham-yard with three quarts of vinegar in the cellar, calling himself a wine-merchant; and whom he afterwards knew living in the same locality, when Durham-yard had become the Adelphi, and the little wine-merchant one of the first men in England for princely wealth and popularity. The close of 1741 saw Garrick's triumph at Goodman's-fields; and the two short years since, which had squandered Foote's fortunes, had firmly established Garrick's as the chief English actor and ornament of Drury-lane. But what the public so freely admitted, there were still critics and actors to dispute. There is no end, as Voltaire says, to the secret capacity for factions; and apart altogether from professional jealousy, when the town has nothing better to quarrel about, a success on the stage will set everybody by the ears. Very loud and violent just now, therefore, were the factions at the Bedford; and prominent was the part taken in them by Foote, and by an Irish actor whom some strength of intellect as well as many eccentricities distinguished from his fellows, already by his half-century of years (he was born before the battle of the Boyne) entitled to be called a veteran, and destined to live for more than half a century longer, but never at any time so generally successful as his particular successes might have seemed to warrant, and now not unnaturally impatient of such complete and universal favour as little Garrick had suddenly leaped into. For the truth was, that Garrick's re-introduction of the natural school had already been attempted by this Irish actor, Charles Macklin; who, undaunted by Mr. Rich's dismissal of him from the Lincoln's-inn theatre twenty years back, as far too familiar, and wanting the grand *hoity-toity* vein, had nevertheless steadily persisted, and at last, eight months

before Garrick appeared, had got the town with him in Shylock; but there, unhappily, had been stopped by his hard voice and his harsh face, the tones in the one like the strokes of a hammer, the lines in the other like cordage. But for the time at least, heartily as he afterwards laughed at him, Foote's sympathy went without stint to the disappointed veteran; and together they formed a strong third party among the critics, standing between the foes and friends of Garrick: maintaining that his familiarity was right, but was not familiar *enough*, and that he wanted the due amount of spirit and courage to take tragedy completely off the stilts. Of this view Foote became a startling and powerful exponent. It suited his sharp, shrewd style; it drew forth his easy, sarcastic humour; and, differing from Garrick only in degree, it did not preclude his expression of what he honestly felt, when it better pleased his own originality to admit that of the great little actor. And his criticism, which took more of the wide range of the world than of the limited one of books, showed one thing undoubtedly, that, reckless as this young spendthrift's career had been, his quick natural talents had protected him against its most degrading influences. His practice of vice had not obscured his discernment of it, nor his experience of folly made his sense of it less keen; and thus early he was a man of influence in the society of the day, before he had written his first farce, or even set foot upon the stage. Such critical perception as that of his Treatise on the Passions, and his Essays on Comedy[1] and Tragedy, could not but make him formidable.

Meanwhile graver matters became importunate with him, from which the only immediate relief seemed to lie in the direction at present most familiar to him. He had to replace the means his extravagance had wasted, and

[1] His *Roman and English Comedy Compared*, published in 1747, is still worth reading, and among other things contained a spirited and generous notice of Hoadly's *Suspicious Husband*, which he welcomed as the best comedy since the *Provoked Husband*, produced exactly twenty years before.

the tendency of his habits and tastes pointed to the stage. From telling shrewdly what should be done, to showing as naturally how to do it, the transition seems easy when the necessity is great; and Foote resolved to make the trial. He consulted with his friends, prominent among whom at this time were the well-known Delavals; Francis, afterwards the baronet, and his brother, Lord Delaval; to the former of whom a few years later he dedicated his first published piece, to commemorate the "generous disinterested friendship" of both brothers at the particular crisis of his fortune which "enlisted him in the service "of the public." They happened to be great lovers of the stage, and the help and co-operation of both confirmed his resolution. The time also peculiarly favoured it: for now occurred the dispute between the leading Drury-lane actors and Fleetwood, which ended in the violent rupture of Garrick and Macklin; when, on the former unexpectedly returning to his allegiance, the latter drew off with the best company he could get together at the moment, went to the little "wooden theatre" in the Haymarket, and threw defiance at the patentees. The licensing-act prevented his taking money at the doors, but the public were "admitted by tickets delivered by Mr. Macklin;" and by advertising and beginning with a concert, he evaded its other provisions. Foote joined the secession, and selected Othello for his opening part.

It was the part that Farquhar tried, and failed in; it was his friend Arthur Murphy's part, when *he* failed; it was his friend Delaval's, on the occasion of a grand private play at Lord Mexborough's, Delaval's brother-in-law, which was afterwards repeated at Drury-lane; it was his imitator Tate Wilkinson's part, it was Barry's, it was Mossop's; and whether a man was to fail or to succeed, to plant himself on the heights of tragedy, to occupy the lesser ground of comedy, or to fall through altogether, Othello seemed still the first object of approach: though less perhaps as a main outwork of the citadel, than as offering, in the coloured face, a means of personal disguise

often welcome to a debutant. Yet with all this it appears surprising that Foote, with his keen common sense and strong feeling for the ridiculous, should have chosen it. But some degree of gravity and enthusiasm is inseparable from youth, and as the part, moreover, was one that Garrick was held to have failed in, it was a bow remaining still to bend. "Here is Pompey," cried a wit from among the audience, when the little face-blackened man entered, in a regimental suit of King George the Second's body-guard, with a flowing Ramilies wig, "but where is "the tea-tray?" Foote shares with old Quin in the fame of this celebrated joke, which was probably not without its effect in checking Garrick's re-appearance in a part, the mere colour and costume of which must have made such an object of him. The matter of dress was a point, indeed, whereon Macklin and Foote had taken special counsel. Ever since Mr. Pope had nodded approval of his Shylock's red hat, and said, "it was very laudable," Macklin had been a great stickler for costume; and the Haymarket bill, announcing for the 6th February 1744 "a concert, after which *Othello*, Othello by a gentleman, "being his first appearance on any stage," was not less careful to announce that "the character of Othello will "be new dressed after the custom of his country."

But the flowing eastern robe could not hide the actor's defects. Foote failed in Othello, there can be no doubt. "Not but one could discover the scholar about the young "fellow," said Macklin, "and that he perfectly knew what "the author meant; but"——Nevertheless, on a reference to the bills, we find that he repeated it three times; on the 13th, 20th, and 23rd of the same month; and that on the 10th of the following month he again acted it for a benefit at Drury-lane, being there announced as "the gentleman "who lately performed it in the Haymarket." He took the same course exactly with the next part he played, that of Lord Foppington; in which he is said to have been more successful, having had hints from Cibber himself on which he whimsically improved. Nor can it be doubted

that in comedy he so far at once made his ground safe, that the public had always a certain welcome for him in parts, which, though leading ones, he seems to have chosen as not absolutely possessed by more successful competitors; and to which therefore, with occasional sallies into such extraneous matter as Shylock, he will be found upon the whole shrewdly to restrict himself. In the winter of 1744-45 he went over to Dublin, and played with some success at the Smock-alley theatre, then just opened by Thomas Sheridan, the son of Swift's friend; and in the winter of 1745-46 he was installed as one of the regular company at Drury-lane. His venture so far had succeeded, and the course of his future life was marked out.

No account has been kept of his performances in Dublin; for though he is said to have drawn crowded houses, his wit was more remembered than his acting, and two of the jokes he made may therefore here be recorded instead of the parts he played. Being reproached, on praising the hospitality of Ireland, as but a half-qualified witness, not having visited the capital of the south, he insisted that he might claim to have as good as seen Cork, he had seen so many drawings of it; and being asked what impression was conveyed to him by the condition of the Irish peasantry, he declared that it had settled a question which before had been a constant plague to him, and he now knew what the English beggars did with their cast-off clothes. The comedies he appeared in at Drury-lane, the winter after his return, are in some degree evidence not only of the character of his acceptance with the public, but of what he felt, himself, in regard to his powers. He played, four times, Sir Harry Wildair in Farquhar's *Constant Couple*, with Peg Woffington, herself the once famous Sir Harry, for his Lady Lurewell. He repeated Lord Foppington, in Vanbrugh's *Relapse*, several times; with Mrs. Woffington as Berinthia, and Mrs. Clive as Miss Hoyden. He revived Addison's comedy of the *Drummer*, which had not been presented for some years,

that he might himself perform Tinsel. He played Sir Novelty Fashion in Cibber's *Love's Last Shift*. He played Sir Courtly Nice in Crowne's comedy of that name. He played the Younger Loveless in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Scornful Lady*, on the occasion of Mrs. Woffington selecting it for her benefit. He repeated, five or six times, the part of Dick in Vanbrugh's *Confederacy*. And finally, he appeared in the Duke of Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, and gave, to the general surprise and delight of many audiences, and the particular consternation of some individuals among them, his version of the celebrated Bayes.

In this selected list, one cannot but recognise something of the personal wit and humorous peculiarity of the man. As the town would not have him in characters that would have carried him out of himself, he darted at once into the other extreme of playing characters closely resembling himself, and took his audiences into confidence with his personal weaknesses and failings. What he now played, he was or had been. He was the graceless son, the adventurer with the handsome leg; he was the flimsy fop and dandy, who had made a god of his tailor and scorned essential for non-essential things; he was the very embodiment of the heedless light-hearted coxcomb, the type of youthful spirits and recklessness let loose upon the world. But what a man is, he does not always look; and in such plays as these, it was Foote's disadvantage that his appearance told against him. In person he was short, with a tendency to stoutness; his face even in youth was round, fleshy, and flat, and his nose had breadth, without strength or delicacy: though he had a pleasing expression of mouth, more refined than in a man of his temperament might perhaps have been looked for; and he had an eye in whose sparkling depths lay a spring of humour unfailing and perpetual, which would have raised from insignificance or repulsiveness features fifty times as coarse or inelegant. In that dramatic gallery of the Garrick Club which may hereafter, to Horace Walpole's traveller from New York, or to Mr. Macaulay's from New

Zealand, be as the Nineveh of a delightful art, even now lost and past away, there hangs a reasonably good copy of the portrait by Reynolds[1] in possession of the Duke of Newcastle, in which all this is visible yet; for though years of indulgence have done their work, and you look on the hardened clumsy features, the settled look, the painful stoop and infirmity of his later life, you see through them still what as a young man Foote must have been—a shrewd, keen, observant, mirthful, thoroughly intellectual man, but not exactly a Sir Harry Wildair, Dick Amlet, or my Lord Foppington. And so the matter seems to have struck himself, notwithstanding the amount of favour he received in such parts; for the expression is attributed to him, "If they won't have me in tragedy, and I am not fit "for comedy, what the deuce *am* I fit for?" A question which it was possible to answer more satisfactorily when he had once played the character of Bayes. It is not unlikely that this performance shaped entirely his subsequent career.

Garrick first introduced imitations into Bayes. The tradition of the part had connected it with Dryden, even to the great old poet's full suit of black velvet; but Garrick took off the black velvet, put on a shabby old-fashioned black coat, and presented a mere quizzical, conceited, solemn ass of a poet, going about reciting his own verses. Cibber condemned the innovation; and Lord Chesterfield said that Bayes had lost dignity by it, and, no longer the burlesque of a great poet, was become no better than a garretteer: but, besides that the character is really no higher than this, the hearty enjoyment of his audiences justified Garrick; and when, in the delivery of the verses, he gave a succession of comical pictures of the actors most familiar to them, they laughed and cheered him to the echo. Garrick's idea Foote now seized, and worked out

[1] During the brief glories of the Manchester Art Festival the original was exhibited, and showed its title to a deservedly high place even among the admirable specimens which had there been collected of the great English painter.

after his own fashion. What was mirthful exaggeration in Garrick, in him became bitter sarcasm; the license Garrick had confined to the theatre, Foote carried with keener aim beyond it; the bad actors on the mimic stage, he kept in countenance by worse actors on the real one; he laughed alike at the grave public transactions, and at the flying absurdities of the day; at the debates in parliament, the failures of the rebels, the follies of the quidnuncs, at politicians, play writers, players; and as, flash upon flash, the merriment arose, Foote must at last have felt where in all respects his real strength lay, and that there was a vacant place in theatres he might of right take possession of, a ground to be occupied without rival or competitor. Davies says, no doubt truly, that what he improvised and added to Bayes was as good as the original, indeed not distinguishable from it but by greater novelty of allusion. Why not strike out, then, another Bayes more strictly suited to himself, equip himself with character and wit provided solely from his own brain, and, with the high claim and double strength of author as well as actor, carry the town by storm?

The last night of his performance at Drury-lane was at the close of April 1746; the interval he employed in drawing out his scheme, and in getting together a small band of actors devoted to him who would help him in its accomplishment; and in the *General Advertiser* of the 22nd of April 1747, appeared the following advertisement:

"At the Theatre in the Haymarket this day will be performed a Concert of Muſic, with which will be given *gratis* a new entertainment called the *Diverſions of the Morning*, to which will be added a farce taken from the *Old Batchelor* called the Credulous Huſband, Fondlewife by Mr. Foote; with an Epilogue to be ſpoken by the B—d—d Coffee Houſe. To begin at 7."

The little theatre was crowded; but the *Diversions*, as then given, was never printed, and its character can only be inferred from such casual recollections as have survived, and from the general effect produced. It was such an

entertainment as till then had not been attempted. Perhaps the closest resemblance to it was Sir William Davenant's, of nearly a century earlier; when he evaded the general closure of the theatres, and baffled the stern watch of the puritans, by his entertainment at Rutland-house "after the manner of the ancients." After the manner of the ancients, too, were Foote's diversions; yet such as no Englishman had attempted before him. In introducing *himself* upon the scene, it is true, he did only what Ben Jonson had done; in laughing at brother authors and rivals, he had the example of both Decker and Old Ben; in satirising politicians and statesmen, he but followed Fielding and Gay; in "taking off" the peculiarities of actors, Eastcourt and Garrick were before him; —but no man, since the old Athenian, had dared to put living people upon the stage, not simply in their impersonal foibles or vices, but with the very trick of voice that identified them, and with the dress in which they walked the streets. In the epilogue of the Bedford coffee-house, the wits and critics of that celebrated place of resort were shown in ludicrous dispute; a notorious physician, less remarkable for professional eminence than for the oddity of his appearance and the meddlesome singularity of his projects, was good-humouredly laughed at; a quack oculist, of wide repute and indisputably bad character, was more bitterly ridiculed; and the first performance had not ceased when Foote received the name which always afterwards clung to him, however in some respects strangely misapplied, of the English Aristophanes.

That a second performance should if possible be prevented, would also seem to have been determined before the first was over. The actors at once took up arms against their merciless assailant, and applied the licensing-act against him.[1] Even if there could be a doubt as to his own spoken dialogue, the portion of Congreve's *Old Bachelor* which he had acted (and where, by the way, Davies,

[1] The virulence of the feeling aroused may be estimated by some lines which the Drury-lane prompter, Chetwood, thinks worth preserving

who never admits him any actor's merit out of his own pieces, says that in Fondlewife he merited and gained much applause from the vividness of his reproduction of the acting of Colley Cibber) brought him clearly within its provisions. On the second night, accordingly, some time before the hour of admission, a strong posse of constables from Bow-street were seen stationed at the doors, who duly drove away the audience as they approached, and "left the laughing Aristophanes," as Mr. Cooke observes, "to consider of new ways and means for his "support."

The consideration did not occupy him long. The first night was the 22nd of April; on the 23rd the constables put the law in force; and the *General Advertiser* of Friday the 24th of April, 1747, contained an advertisement to this effect:

"On Saturday noon, exactly at 12 o'clock, at the new Theatre in the Haymarket, Mr. Foote begs the favour of his friends to come and drink a diſh of Chocolate with him; and 'tis hoped there will be a great deal of Comedy and ſome joyous ſpirits; he will endeavour to make the Morning as Diverting as poſſible. Tickets for this entertainment to be had at George's Coffee-Houſe, Temple-Bar, without which no perſon will be admitted. N.B. *Sir Dilbury Diddle will be there, and Lady Betty Friſk has abſolutely promiſed.*"

Against a spirit that thus laughed defiance at his adversaries, turned injuries to commodities, and rose more mirthful and buoyant from what to any other had been hopeless depression and defeat, the clauses of acts of parliament and the staffs of constables were uplifted in vain. The magistrates of London never issued another warrant against Foote.

in that curious little volume about the Stage which he published so early as 1749.

"Thou mimic of Cibber—of Garrick thou ape!
Thou Fop in Othello! thou Cypher in shape! &c.
Thou mummer in action! thou coffee-house jester!
Thou mimic *sans* sense! mock hero in gesture!
Can the squeak of a puppet present us a Quin?
Or a pigmy, or dwarf, shew a giant's design? &c.
Can a *Foot* represent us the length of a *yard?*
Where, then, shall such insolence meet its reward?"
&c. &c. &c.

But would he really give chocolate, as he promised? A great many seem to have gone to the theatre expecting it; and Sir Dilbury Diddle and Lady Betty Frisk (or in other words, according to a paper of the day, "many "among the nobility and lovers of the drama in high life, "who dreaded and were attracted by the personality of "his satire") were particularly early in their attendance. All was intense expectation in the small densely-crowded theatre, when Foote came forward, and with a respectful bow acquainted them "that as he was training some "young performers for the stage, he would, with their "permission, whilst chocolate was getting ready, proceed "with his instructions before them." That was his entire secret. The constables had not dispersed even his little company of actors. There they were still, crouching concealed under the service of chocolate; gathered from obscure corners of theatres or streets, wherever his quick sure eye could detect them; the ragged regiment that Churchill afterwards laughed at, as

> "—— the legion which our summer Bayes
> From alleys here and there contrived to raise;"

but in perfect drill and fitness for his purpose; and among them an actor of small parts, Castallo, whom he thought comparable to Nokes for a quiet humour and strict propriety; and a youth, afterwards known as Ned Shuter, whom he picked up marking at a billiard-table, and made one of the first low comedians of the day. With these his Diversions began, and were repeated no less than forty times. Now, as his pupils, he taught them how to act; now, as old actors, he rehearsed the finest scenes of the stage with them; now, as critics, wits, authors, or politicians, he improvised with them dialogues of passing allusion to the times. Not an object presented itself at the moment on which his eye could rest, that he did not turn, like Biron, to a mirth-moving jest; nor were his hearers less ravished at the "voluble discourse" than those of the noble of Navarre. The exceptions of course

were the old actors; and from their complaints he drew only fresh occasion for a jest. Thus he changed his instructions to his pupils, one morning, into a comment on the outcry against himself. He denied that what he did could be hurtful, if what they did justified their pretensions; but if it really be true, he added, that mimickry will ruin them, it is at least becoming that the mimic who displaces them from what they are not suited to, should place them where their abilities may be better employed. And then he made a Quin a watchman, for his sonorous weighty style; Delane a beggarman, for his tendency to whine; Ryan a knife-grinder, for his shrillness and monotony; Woodward, anything in the way of cleverness *but* the fine gentleman which he always assumed to be; and so, through all the rest. There was no carrying on such a contest. The actors sounded a retreat; and further opposition was not offered to even the more direct competition with the theatres implied in Foote's change of his entertainment from morning to evening. It was accordingly announced, in June, that

"At the requeſt of ſeveral perſons who are deſirous of ſpending an hour with Mr. Foote, but find the time inconvenient, inſtead of Chocolate in the morning Mr. Foote's friends are deſired to drink a diſh of Tea with him at half an hour paſt 6 in the evening."

And from this time *Mr. Foote's Tea* became an admitted theatrical attraction.

It brought him an offer from Covent-garden in the winter of this year, where he not only gave it several times, but repeated Bayes and Fondlewife; put new strength into it, in the following January, by a new prologue; for his benefit, in February, ushered it in by his performance of Cibber's favourite Sir Novelty Fashion; and, in the following month, opened with it again at the Haymarket, where he soon after varied it with what he called an *Auction of Pictures*, the advertisements announcing that "This evening At his Auction Room, late the "little theatre in the Haymarket, Mr. Foote will exhibit "a choice Collection of Pictures, &c." The collection

proved, indeed, so choice, that before the summer season closed it was repeated nearly fifty times; and again, in the winter, it was resumed in the same little theatre; where, however, his run of success had to undergo interruption from that announcement of unparalleled impudence which invited the public to come and see a man go bodily into a quart bottle placed on a table before them, and sing a song in it. Foote never believed that the public would have sense *not* to come to such an invitation, and he had of course no power himself to rescind an engagement which the proprietor of the house, Mr. Potter, had reserved the right to make without consulting him; but he took the precaution of compelling Potter to appoint his own receiver, so that at least a return of the money taken at the doors might be secured to the fools who should pay it. We now know that not to plunder, but to gull and laugh at the public, was the aim of the eccentric Duke of Montagu who devised this hoax, and who put forward a poor Scotchman who had some office about the India-house to execute it; but not the less was Foote's suggestion a wise one. He knew not more surely the credulity that would fill the theatre, than the rage that would seek some victim for its 'scapegoat; and nothing had a greater effect in restoring good temper than his public announcement, after the riot, of the precaution he had taken. This feeling also he improved by his promise, a few days later, that by particular desire he should exhibit at his *Auction* "some entire new lots, consisting of a "poet, a beau, a Frenchman, a miser, a tailor, a sot, two "young gentlemen, and a ghost; two of which are origi-"nal, the rest copies from the best masters." He added, in renewed ridicule of one of the most discreditable quacks then living, that he should deliver a quite new oration in praise of sight.

Ready wit and shrewd observation had been as usual manifest in his seizure of the great weakness of the day as a new vehicle of entertainment and satire. For such were Auctions. They were at this time, and continued until

much later, to be, the favourite morning occupation of the fashionable and idle, and agencies for all kinds of deception. They encouraged the cheat and impostor, discountenancing the honest tradesman; they connived at private vices, destroyed public taste, and brought to the same level, with a knock-down of the hammer, the worst and the best things. Let us look at Foote's picture of an auctioneer, as a piece of the truth of his time, and see if we may not recognise some truth in it still.

He makes him the most insinuating and oily of orators; and, from a Niger to a Nautilus, from the Apollo Belvidere to a Butterfly, a professed connoisseur. He has an auction at twelve, and can add your friend's cargo to the catalogue. It can be done readily; every day's practice; it is for the credit of the sale. Only last week, among the valuable effects of a gentleman going abroad, he sold a choice collection of china, with a curious service of plate, though the real party was never master of above two delft dishes and a dozen of pewter, in all his life. Many an aigrette and solitaire has he sold, to discharge a lady's play debt; but then (aside) he must know the parties, otherwise it might be knocked down to the husband himself. That premised, he has no difficulty. He sells Mr. Scrap's etchings for Rembrandt's; Tom Jackson's pots and pans for a Teniers; and, for a medal of the Empress Oriuna, a Bristol soapboiler's farthing. For, to your truly great auctioneer, everything is alike; as he is himself, with that inimitably fine manner of his, alike in everything. He has as much to say upon a Ribbon as upon a Raffaele.

Nor was it only such legitimate game for satire that Foote ran down in his *Auction*, but, in the lots exposed for sale, his wit again took the range of town, and made its quarry of whatever invited attack most prominently, whether in law or in medicine, in parliament or on the stage. He who would now derive any adequate notion of this from his writings, will nevertheless search them in vain. Neither the *Diversions* nor the *Auction* was printed;

and though portions of both reappeared in the little comedy called *Taste*, it is manifest that in this as in every similar piece of direct satire (the *Orators* for example), what we now read as Foote's is but the faint reflection of what he actually uttered. The allusions in the correspondence of the time, the singular personal hostility he had already provoked, the mixed deference, fear, and popularity which thus early attended him, are not to be explained simply by the accident of a coarse personality here and there in his imitations; but by the fact that he undisguisedly appeared before the public as a Satirist, that the entire groundwork of his entertainment was Satire, and that his confessed aim from the first was the ridicule of what was ridiculous, in whatever walk of society he might find it. No doubt a distinction existed between his regular published pieces, and these earlier ones which he never sent to the press; for though living characters were hit off in both, the context which has preserved the one was such as to render the other perishable. When you can only read through the help of allusions that have all passed away, the attempt to read would be useless labour. In this *Auction of Pictures*, he laughed at the Westminster justice, Sir Thomas de Veil, who had made himself the too ready instrument of the actors in opposing his first entertainment; he ridiculed Mr. Cock the fashionable auctioneer, and he satirised the extravagances of Orator Henley; but all this was as temporary in itself as the witty and versatile comment that set it forth, and both have descended to oblivion. When, however, in his more regular productions, he took higher aim; when he ridiculed the cant of methodism, denounced the mischiefs of quackery, or exposed the impostures of law; when, himself the companion of men of rank and large possessions, he attacked the vulgarity of rank-and-money-worship, and did not spare the knavery or false pretensions of either birth or wealth,—his satire, even when applied to persons, had the claim to become impersonal through time; and to remain as a warning to vice

and folly, long after the vicious and the foolish should be forgotten.

Yet in this we would not assume any absolute decision of a question beset with delicate and difficult considerations. In the most apparently justifiable instances of individual satire, there is at best a violation involved which perhaps no individual amendment, or even general benefit, may compensate; and the question must always remain whether he who assumes, is entitled to exert, a censorship over morals and manners. But in Foote's case, as in every other, it is right to state the matter fairly; and however mistaken the belief may have been in him (as he had afterwards bitter reason to feel), he seems clearly to have believed himself within the just limits of Comedy, even in "taking off" mere folly and absurdities without vice, as long as his imitations of them should be faithful, as long as the singularities themselves should be sufficiently prominent and known, and, where caused by natural infirmities, should have been thrust forward with an indecent obtrusiveness which the very sense of infirmity ought to have restrained. To this, we shall perhaps do him no injustice if we add what once fell from the lips of even so great a genius as Molière. "I am manager of a "theatre as well as author. I must make some money, "as well as correct and instruct; and I am necessarily "sometimes induced to consult the profit and interest "of my company, at the expense of my own fame as an "author."

As an author, however, Foote's first published piece now awaits us. It was played, with the title of *The Knights*, when the run of the *Auction* had somewhat abated; and it lives still among his writings, as it deserves to do. It is the first sprightly running of a wit, which to the last retained its sparkle and clearness. Its flow of dialogue is exquisitely neat, natural, and easy; in expression terse and characteristic always, and in tone exactly suited to its purpose. With neither the flippancy and pertness of mere farce, nor yet the elaboration and refine-

ment of comedy, it hits with happy effect the medium between the two. It is just the writing that developes character, and is there content to stop. There is a story, but extremely slight, and only cared for till the characters are completely shown. For these exclusively, you perceive at once, the piece has been written; and nothing is added that can possibly be spared. One knight, a country quidnunc, has the most insatiable thirst for news, with not the remotest comprehension of politics; and the other, a wealthy miser, has a taste as insatiable for stale stories, with no other entertainment for his friends. And though confined within the compass of two acts, of which the scene is laid in a little inn in Herefordshire, with such elaborate skill in the dialogue is the full-length of each presented, and with an effect so thoroughly real, that mere general description would do scanty justice to it, and we must try a personal introduction.

Sir Penurious Trifle is a miser, and Sir John Cutler and his transmigrated stockings were but a feeble type of him. Of his head and his daughter's, for instance, the barber has the growth once a-year for shaving the knight once a-fortnight; his shoes are made with the leather of a coach of his grandfather's; his male servant is footman, groom, carter, coachman, and tailor; and his maid employs in plain work for the neighbours her leisure hours, which Sir Penurious takes care, as her labour is for his emolument, shall be as many as possible, by himself joining with his daughter in scouring the rooms and making the beds. This being his moral character, his intellectual is of a piece, being all made up and borrowed; and the last man he is with, must afford him matter for the next he goes to. Above all things he thanks you for a *story*. Throw him out that, and, no matter whether savoury or insipid, down it goes with him, and up again to the first person he meets. You meet him and remark that he looks well. "Aye, aye, stout enough," he replies, "stout "enough, brother knight! hearty as an oak; hey, Dick? "Gad, now I talk of an oak, I'll tell you a story of an

" oak; it will make you die with laughing." The story is long; but would you like to hear its close, as he heard it himself in a coffee-house in Bath, where he once extravagantly breakfasted?

" Lord Tom told us the story; made us die with laughing; it cost me eightpence, though I had a breakfast at home: so, you knight, when Noll died, Monk there, you, afterwards Albemarle, in the north, brought him back: so you, the Cavaliers, you have heard of them? they were friends to the Stuarts, what did they do, 'Gad, you Dick, but they put up Charles in a sign, the royal oak, you have seen such signs at country ale-houses: so, 'Gad, you, what does a puritan do, the puritans were friends to Noll, but he puts up the sign of an owl in the ivy-bush, and underneath he writes, 'This is not the royal oak:' you have seen writings under signs, you knight: upon this, says the royalists, 'Gad, this must not be: so, you, what do they do, but, 'Gad, they prosecuted the poor puritan; but they made him change his sign, though: and, you Dick, how d'ye think he changed? 'Gad, he puts up the royal oak, and underneath he writes, 'This is not 'the owl in the ivy-bush.' It made us all die with laughing."

His companion, Sir Gregory Gazette, the other knight, is a country politician, thoroughly miserable when he can get neither the *Gloucester Journal*, nor the *Worcester Courant*, nor the *Northampton Mercury*, nor the *Chester Mercury;* but with longing glances always cast towards London. Let a mutual friend introduce to him a stranger, and the quidnunc rides impatiently over the first sentence of salutation: "Sir, I am proud to—Well, Sir, what "news? You come from—pray, Sir, are you a parliament "man?" "Not I indeed, Sir." "Good-lack, maybe "belong to the law?" "Nor that." "Oh, then in some "of the offices; the Treasury or the Exchequer?" "Neither, Sir." "Lack-a-day! that's wonderful!" Any wonder he will accept as a common fact, but over any and every common fact he cries wonderful! He is played upon with the information that there are in London one hundred and fifty newspapers printed in a week.

"Good now, good now!" he exclaims. "And all full, I reckon; full as an egg; nothing but news! Well, well, I shall

go to London one of these days. A hundred and fifty! Wonderful! And, pray now, which do you reckon the best? Who gives us the best account of the King of Spain, and the Queen of Hungary, and those great folks?—Come you," he suggests to his new friend, "you could give us a little news if you would; come now!—snug!—nobody by!—Good now, do. Come, ever so little."

His clear notions on political affairs, and the profundity of his discretion, will appear from his reception of a hint which is thrown out to him of a treaty with the Pope. "With the Pope! Wonderful! Good now, good now! "how, how?" Well, he is told, we are to yield him up a large tract of the *Terra Incognita*, together with both the Needles, the Scilly-Rocks, and Lizard-Point, on condition that the Pretender has the government, and the Bishop of Greenland succeeds to St. Peter's chair. That might seem, at first sight, to be not altogether an advantageous arrangement; but the Bishop, being a Protestant, no sooner finds himself possessed of the pontificals, than he issues out a bull commanding all Roman Catholics to be of his religion; they, deeming the Pope infallible, follow his directions; and then, Sir Gregory, his well-informed friend, triumphantly concludes, We are all of one mind!

"Good lack, good lack! rare news, rare news, rare news! Ten millions of thanks, Mr. Hartop. But might not I just hint this to Mr. Soakum, our vicar? 'twould rejoice his heart. *Oh fie! by no means.* Only a line—a little hint—do now. *Well, it is so difficult to refuse Sir Gregory anything.* Ten thousand thanks! now! The Pope—wonderful! I'll minute it down—both the Needles? *Ay, both.* Good, now, I'll minute it—the Lizard-Point—both the Needles—Scilly-Rocks—Bishop of Greenland—St. Peter's Chair—Why, then, when this is finished, we may chance to attack the Great Turk, and have holy-wars again, Mr. Hartop? *That is part of the scheme.* Ah! good now! you see I have a head! politics have been my study many a day. Ah! if I had been in London to improve by the newspapers!"

That is Sir Gregory Gazette, who has no higher favour to ask of you, than, Good now, could not you make

interest at some coffee-house in London to buy, for a small matter, the old volumes of newspapers, and send them into the country to him? They would pass away his time rarely in rainy weather. Lack-a-day! he's glad the Pope is not to have Gibraltar, though! We will leave him with Son Tim reading his favourite *London Evening* to him, that we may show how honestly he likes to have it read.

"Lackaday! good now, Tim, the politics, child: and read the stars, and the dashes, and the blanks, as I taught you, Tim. *Yes, father.—We can assure our readers that the D dash is to go to F blank, and that a certain noble L— is to resign his pl—e in the T—y, in order to make r—m for the two three stars.*—Wonderful! Good now! good now! great news, Tim! Ah, I knew the two three stars would come in play one time or other. This *London Evening* knows more than any of them. Well, child, well."

And so the reader gets a tolerably clear notion of both miser and quidnunc, of whom it is as easy to believe that both characters had living prototypes in Foote's day, as it would be difficult to believe that either has quite ceased to have his living representative in our own. The peculiarities are so true to the respective foibles and vices exhibited, the colouring so rich, and the humorous extravagance of detail so racy and effective. He tells us, himself, that he had copied them from life, having met with them in a summer's expedition; and in that sense he challenges for them the merit, as one by no means common in his day, of being neither vamped from antiquated plays nor pilfered from French farces. The plot, we should add, is in such manner constructed that Sir Penurious does not himself appear except in the assumption of the lover of the piece, who in that disguise imposes on Sir Gregory; and this part was played by Foote himself, who dressed it after a certain gentleman in the West of England, whose manners, Mr. Cook tells us, he took off with uncommon humour and perspicuity.

But while thus engaged, a somewhat startling announcement in the *General Advertiser* greeted him. It came

from the comedian Woodward, now one of the company at Drury-lane under Garrick's new lesseeship; and its purport was, that on a certain evening, by particular desire, Mr. Woodward would present his very good friend the Auctioneer with *Tit for Tat*, or one dish of his own Chocolate. He was to imitate him in Bayes and Othello, laugh at him as a tragic actor, and dress at him in a character of Otway's. Now Foote was no exception to the rule which makes the mimic intensely sensitive to mimickry, and he wrote at once to Garrick. It was rumoured, he said, that a very contemptible friend of the Drury-lane manager was to appear in a particular character of a revived comedy, habited like his humble servant, the present writer; of course his humble servant laboured under quite as little apprehension from the passive wit of Mr. Garrick, as from the active humour and imitation of Mr. Woodward; nevertheless, as it seemed they, Mr. Garrick and himself, were to be in a state of nature, he might as well mention that he had a plan for a short farce that would be wormwood to some, entertaining to many, and very beneficial to Samuel Foote. The temper of the letter further appeared in a postscript somewhat the reverse of dignified, about the free admission at Drury-lane. "If your boxkeeper," he added, "for the future returns my name, he will cheat you "of a sum not very contemptible to you, namely, five "shillings." Garrick had a pen, however, only less neat than his antagonist's; and though he retorted about the five shillings almost as poorly as Foote had introduced it, there was wit and point in what he added as to Woodward. "Should he dress at you in the play, how can you be "alarmed at it, or take it ill? The character, exclusive "of some little immoralities which can never be applied "to you, is that of a very smart, pleasant, conceited "fellow, and a good mimic." It was the character of Malagene in Otway's *Friendship in Fashion;* but, as the play, and Woodward too, excellent comedian as he was, were hissed off the stage together for the mixed dullness

and indecency of the entertainment they presented, nothing more on the subject need here be said. Its only interest for us is, that it shows us something thus early of that fitful intercourse of Garrick and Foote, which, while they lived, interfered not a little with the comfort of both, and which cannot be omitted from any view of the character of either.

From the first they were marked out for rivalry. Distinguished by their superior intellectual qualities from all competitors in the profession to which they belonged, they had only each other to carry on a competition with; and if, as Pope says, war is necessary to the life of a wit upon earth, what are we to expect when the wit has another in the same line to make war upon, who is not only jester and player like himself, but rival manager too? The virtue must be more than human that refrains; and the "state of nature" at which Foote hints in his letter, was accordingly very often renewed. No doubt also, Foote was almost always the aggressor. His wit was ever at its best with a victim wincing under it, and Garrick's too obvious weaknesses were a temptation difficult to be resisted. Gravely to dispute the genius of such a man would have been in Foote himself a weakness less pardonable, but in Garrick's own restless distrust of it, in his perpetual fidget of *self*-doubt and suspicion, in his abundance of small social defects, the occasion for laughter was incessant. Foote came into the Bedford one night, and kept him on the rack for an hour with the account of a most wonderful actor whom he had that instant seen. He had been so moved by spoken words, he declared, as he could not till then have thought possible. Nothing like it had occurred in his experience. It was an effect to make itself felt far and wide. The manifest suffering of his listener at last became so pitiful that Foote good-naturedly brought it to a close by asking him what he thought of the histrionic talents of Mr. Pitt? when Garrick's glad surprise broke out into unaffected enthusiasm, and he declared, as he seems truly to have

felt, that if Pitt had chosen the stage he might have been immeasurably the first actor upon it.

There was also in Garrick another kind of weakness or suffering which Foote's jokes never spared, and of which we have heard many whimsical examples from the poet and wit who is happily still the living link[1] between that age and our own. "Garrick lately invited Hurd," said Foote to a friend of Mr. Rogers's, "to dine with him in the "Adelphi; and after dinner, the evening being very warm, "they walked up and down in front of the house. As "they passed and repassed the dining-room windows, "Garrick was in a perfect agony; for he saw that there "was a thief in one of the candles which were burning on "the table, and yet Hurd was a person of such conse-"quence that he could not turn away from him to prevent "the waste of his tallow." Another was told to Mr. Rogers by Murphy, who, describing to Foote some remarks made by Garrick on Lacy's love of money as a mere attempt to cover his own parsimony by throwing it on his fellow patentee, had ended with the old question of Why on earth didn't Garrick take the beam out of his own eye before attacking the mote in other people's. "He is not sure," said Foote, "of selling the timber." Yet a third instance Mr. Rogers was not less fond of relating, and told with infinite humour. At the Chapter coffee-house, Foote and his friends were making a contribution for the relief of a poor fellow, a decayed player, who was nick-named the Captain of the Four Winds because his hat was worn into four spouts. Each person of the company dropped his mite into the hat, as it was held out to him. "If Garrick "hears of this," exclaimed Foote, "he will certainly send "us *his* hat.

That Garrick was not absolutely a mean or illiberal man, there is nevertheless abundant proof; but he began

[1] Mr. Rogers died in December 1855. But many of his best anecdotes and most subtle sayings have been collected in the scholar-like book of *Table Talk* by which Mr. Dyce has paid worthy tribute to his memory.

the world, as Johnson expresses it, with a great hunger for money, and what at the outset of life was a commendable feeling in him, became in later life a habit of which he could not always divest himself, and which exposed very often to undeserved derision a really kind and open nature. In the main, however, the impression derived from the great run of Foote's jokes on this subject is rather friendly and even cordial than otherwise. "There is a witty sati-" rical story of Foote," says Johnson. "He had a small "bust of Garrick placed upon his bureau. 'You may "'be surprised,' said he, 'that I allow him to be so near "'my gold;—but you will observe he has no hands?'" The joke is a good one, but a man would hardly so place an object displeasing to him that his eye would have to rest upon it daily and hourly, for the sake of making fifty jokes infinitely better; and the sarcasm is less worth remembering than the friendly good-will lurking under it. Another story is told of a somewhat pompous announcement, at one of Foote's dinner-parties when the Drury-lane manager was among the guests, of the arrival of "*Mr. Garrick's servants;*" whereupon, "Oh, let them "wait," cried the wit, adding, in an affected under-tone to his own servant, but sufficiently loud to be generally heard; "but, James, be sure you lock up the pantry." A third, which continues to exhibit them in cordial intercourse, is of their leaving the Bedford together one night when Foote had been the entertainer, and on his pulling out his purse to pay the bill, a guinea had dropped. Impatient at not immediately finding it, "Where on earth can it be "gone to?" he said. "Gone to the devil, I think," rejoined Garrick, who also had been seeking for it everywhere. "Well said, David," cried Foote, "let you alone for making "a guinea go farther than anybody else."

The friendly feeling may often be imperilled by a laugh, but the laugh is never without a friendly feeling. Again we find it most predominant, when, one sultry summer night at the Haymarket, the *Lying Valet* had been put up after the *Devil upon Two Sticks* to please Garrick, and the satis-

fied little manager has called in at the green-room with a triumphant "Well, Sam, so you are taking up, I see, with "*my* farces, after all;" whereupon Foote cannot but throw in this drop of allaying Tiber: "Why, yes, David, "what could I do better? I must have some ventilator this "intolerably hot weather." It was the same when he insinuated a skilful compliment to Garrick into the admirable little comedy just named, and was careful to qualify it with the hint that the Devil himself could not match him at a bargain; or when, in the great scene of the Society of Antiquaries in the *Nabob*, he coupled his veneration for Shakespeare with his eagerness for a "Queen Anne's farthing." The bane and the antidote are still found together. Nor could Garrick himself help laughing at his friend's dry mention of his Hampton temple to Shakespeare, when, replying to one of the attacks upon his theatre in which all the authorities of the Fathers had been quoted to show the Heathen tendency of such entertainments, Foote took occasion to say: "I never heard that Mr. Garrick sacri- "ficed to Pan, or that Mr. Rich danced a jig in honour of "Cybele. The former gentleman has indeed, it is said, "dedicated a temple to a certain divinity called Σχακεσπεαρε, "before whose shrine frequent libations are made, and on "whose altar the fat of venison (a viand grateful to the "deity) is seen often to smoke; but these profanations "never entered the theatre, nor do I believe that any of "the players ever assisted at the sacrifices: so this must "be considered as a mere piece of personal superstition, "for which the man, and not the profession, is account- "able." Garrick could no more have resented gravely this comical hit at his imperfect hospitalities, than Shakespeare the pleasant allusion to his deer-stealing propensities. In a word, we think it clear that Garrick came within the limitation of a celebrated principle first laid down by Foote, that you ought not to run the chance of losing your friend for your joke unless your joke happens to be better than your friend. It was never worth while in this case quite to put the friendship in peril.

The always ready scholarship of Foote, let us add, appears to have given him an advantage over Garrick even where otherwise Garrick might have held himself supreme, namely, in ordinary conversation. Cooke says that it yielded him an astonishing amount of topics; that while Garrick's manner was more pleasing, he had nothing of the give and take of the other, or of his exhaustless variety of resource; and that in reality it was out of the abundance of his knowledge Foote dared to give his wit the reckless privilege it took, and to display always so little fear of the consequences. Nor was it only in scholarship, or the widest ordinary range of a man of wit, that he made so ready and great a figure. Charles James Fox told Mr. Rogers that Lord William Bentinck once invited Foote to meet him and some others at dinner in St. James's-street, and that they were rather angry at Lord William for having done so, expecting that Foote would prove only a bore, and a check on their conversation. "But," said Fox, "we soon found that we were mistaken. What-" ever we talked about,—whether fox-hunting, the turf, or " any other subject,—Foote instantly took the lead, and " delighted us all."

The scholarship, as we have seen, is frankly admitted by Johnson himself, no partial witness, who also gives Foote the superiority over every one he had heard in what he calls humorous narrative. Such was the happiness of his manner in that kind of relation, he says, that he never saw the stupidity it could not rouse or the arrogance it could not subdue. Pointing out on another occasion the superior gaiety, delicacy, and elegance of Garrick's conversation, he added that Foote nevertheless provoked much more laughter; and though he might have the air of a buffoon paid for entertaining the company, it was that of one who well deserved his hire. Thus encouraged, Boswell ventured one day to remark how superior a tragic actor must always be to those who only make us laugh. " If Betterton and Foote were to walk into this room, you " would respect Betterton much more than Foote."

"Sir," said Johnson, "if Betterton were to walk into this "room with Foote, Foote would soon drive him out of "it. Foote, Sir, *quatenus* Foote, has powers superior to "them all."

We shall perhaps amuse the reader by putting this remark to proof. Garrick and Foote were among the company one day at the dinner-table of Lord Mansfield. Many grave people were there, and the manager of Drury-lane was on his best good-company behaviour. Every one listened deferentially to him as he enlarged on the necessity of prudence in all the relations of life, and drew his illustration from Churchill's death, which was then the talk of the town. No one would have supposed it possible to dislodge him from such vantage-ground as this, surrounded by all the decorums of life, and with a Lord Chief Justice at the head of the table. But Foote unexpectedly struck in. He said that every question had two sides, and he had long made up his mind on the advantages implied in the fact of *not* paying one's debts (as a modern wit expressed it, muddling away one's money on tradesmen's bills). In the first place it presupposed some time or other the possession of fortune to have been able to *get* credit. Then, living on credit was the art of living without the most troublesome thing in the whole world, which was money. It saved the expense and annoyance of keeping accounts, and made over all the responsibility to other people. It was the panacea for the cares and embarrassments of wealth. It checked and discount-enanced avarice; while, people being always more liberal of others' goods than their own, it extended every sort of encouragement to generosity. If, indeed, the genuine spark of primitive Christianity was ever to revive, from this quarter it would come, and through the communion of property by such means again brought about. And would any one venture to say, meanwhile, that paying one's debts could possibly draw to us such anxious attention from our own part of the world while we live, or such sincere regrets when we die, as *not* paying them? All

which, Foote put with such whimsical gravity, and supported with such a surprising abundance of sarcastic illustration, that in the general laughter against Garrick no laugh was heartier than Lord Mansfield's.

That Foote was able to pay his own debts at the time, and so far was independent of his argument, may perhaps be inferred from his resort to it in this dignified company; and as we have anticipated thus far, his introduction to Johnson, which dated many years before the Chief Justice's dinner, and indeed followed soon after Garrick's production of *Irene* at Drury-lane, may here most fitly be added. It took place at the house of Fitzherbert, one of Johnson's earliest London friends, and whose steady friendship for Foote (which descended to his family, for his eldest son, the brother of Lord St. Helens, was Foote's executor) is no mean evidence to character. "Having no "good opinion of the fellow," he said, describing the incident long afterwards to Boswell, "I was resolved not "to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man "against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty "sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so "very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and "fork, throw myself back in my chair, and fairly laugh it "out. No, Sir, he was irresistible." After this we find more frequent traces of intercourse between them than might be inferred from that tone of Johnson's later life; but he never completely forgave even the threat to bring him on the stage in connection with the Cock-lane ghost, though this was only a retort for a contemptuous allusion of his own, and was at once abandoned (if ever seriously entertained) as Murphy expressly tells us with "no ill-will "on either side."[1] At unexpected times and in unlooked-for places we meet them together. It was at Foote's

[1] Something of the earlier feeling seems to have returned when he heard of Foote's death. "Did you "think he would so soon be gone?" he wrote to Mrs. Thrale, his thoughts instinctively turning to Falstaff. "Life, says Falstaff, is a shuttle. "He was a fine fellow in his way, "and the world is really impoverished "by his sinking glories. I would "have his life written with dili-"gence."

dinner-table Johnson made the memorable disclosure of having written, in a garret in Exeter-street, one of the most admired of the speeches of Mr. Pitt. It is Foote who tells the story of Johnson's Jacobite sympathies breaking out so strangely, on their visiting Bedlam together, when he again and again returned to the cell of the poor furious madman, who, while beating his straw, supposed he was beating the Duke of Cumberland. It was Foote who made him roar when some one had remarked of the Rockingham ministry that they were fatigued to death, and quite at their wits' end, whereupon the humourist rejoined, that the fatigue could hardly have arisen from the length of the journey. It is from Foote he quotes the rebuke to Lord Loughborough for his ill-judged ambition to associate with the wits, "What can he mean "by coming among us? He is not only dull himself, but "the cause of dullness in others." And they were still on familiar terms when Johnson visited Paris more than twenty years later, and even Boswell could not but indulge a laugh at the wit's description of the travelling philosopher. But our subject calls us back to the time at which the retrospect of Foote's career may be resumed, nor could anything restore us to it more appropriately than one of Johnson's most amusing reminiscences.

After running through one of his fortunes, Foote was in difficult straits for money, and was induced to listen to the overtures of a small-beer brewer, who, in consideration of his large social acquaintance and unbounded popularity, offered him a sleeping-partner's share in the profits of the concern if he would but recommend the beer among his friends. Fitzherbert was one of the friends who took it in consequence; but it became so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it, though they found themselves at some loss in what way to notify their resolution. Knowing Foote's connection with the beer, they were afraid of offending their master, by whom they also knew Foote to be much cherished as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite,

to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small beer no longer. As fortune would have it, however, on that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table; when he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down stairs he told them, "This is the finest man "I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. "I will drink his small beer."

The fortune he had just spent, we grieve to say, was the third. It fell to him from the death of a relation of his mother's, immediately after the success of the *Knights:* and on the strength of it, if Mr. Cooke is to be believed, he set up a dashing carriage with *iterum, iterum, iterumque* painted on the panel; and contributed largely for some time, in companionship with his friends the Delavals,[1] to the splendours and extravagance of London dissipation. He may have been an ill judge of small beer, but his taste for the richest wines was unquestionable; and in his own

[1] Horace Walpole (writing on the 13th of March 1751) details to his friend Mann, among the scandalous gossip of London, the alleged not very creditable connection of "one Foote, "a player" (it is the first time he is mentioned by Walpole, who afterwards regarded him with oddly mingled feelings of deference and admiration, dislike and fear) with the Delaval family. It is not necessary to go into details, but the charge (quite unfounded as we believe) is that Foote had induced the elder Delaval to marry a woman of title to whom he had himself been in the position of Tom Jones to Lady Bellaston. In the same letter Walpole proceeds to describe the private performance of *Othello* at Drury-lane, on the 7th of March 1751, to which we have already made reference, and in which of course Foote assisted the Delavals. "A play has been acted," he writes, "by people of some fashion "at Drury-lane, hired on purpose. "They really acted so well, that it "is astonishing they should not have "had sense enough not to act at all. "You would know none of their "names should I tell you; but the "chief were a family of Delavals. . . "The rage was so great to see this "performance, that the House of "Commons literally adjourned at "three o'clock on purpose: the foot-"man's gallery was strung with blue "ribands. What a wise people! "What an august senate! Yet my "Lord Granville once told the Prince, "I forget on occasion of what folly, "'Sir, Indeed your Royal Highness "'is in the wrong to act thus: the "'English are a grave nation.'"—*Letters,* Ed. Cunningham, ii. 242-3.

kitchen, if common rumour was to be believed, port was a more familiar beverage than beer during those days of extravagance. The story went, that dining at the table of a nobleman whose tastes were in the other extreme, and whose habit was not only to drink his port-wine himself, but to give his friends nothing else, Foote met his wine-merchant, who asked him in the course of conversation how the last supply of port turned out. "Why, I should "suppose, pretty well," said Foote, "as I have had no "complaints from the kitchen." We may imagine the ease with which three fortunes would disappear in such an establishment, and we need not be surprised that change of air and scene was found soon to be essential. Now it was, we are told, that he "moved off to the Continent to add "one more dupe to the intrigues and fripperies of the "French nation." It is certain that he was frequently, and for considerable periods together, absent from London between 1749 and 1752, in which latter year he presented to Garrick the little comedy of *Taste*, for which the manager of Drury-lane, again on the best possible terms with him, both wrote and spoke the prologue.

This piece was little more than a selection from the characters in his *Auction* and *Diversions*, with a thread of story sufficient to connect them for dramatic purposes; but it shows of what genuine stuff those early entertainments must have been composed, and it fairly justifies the claim he makes in its dedication to his friend Delaval, that the critics are not to call him presumptuous for dignifying so short a performance with the name of a comedy until they can prove that its scenes and persons are burlesqued or untrue to nature. He also reminds his friend how often their conversations had turned to the distinctions between comedy and farce, "for in whatever "dissipation the world may suppose our days to have "been consumed, many, many hours have been conse-"crated to other subjects than generally employ the "giddy and gay." Nor was this the only intimation which now went forth to the public that Foote was returning to

their service from far different associations and employments. The little comedy was not acted for his own emolument, but was a gift to an ingenious and humorous man, James Worsdale (the Jemmy Worsdale who carried Pope's letters to Curll), an English painter whose misfortunes had driven him to the stage, whose treatment by Sir Godfrey Kneller induced Walpole and others to befriend him, and whose personal history made not inappropriate to him the offering of a little comedy whose design was to satirize the ignorant affectation with which the fashion of the day gave eager welcome to anything with the appearance of age upon it, and turned away scornfully from modern art however meritorious.

That this was really the design of *Taste*, and that the criticism is hasty and incorrect which attributes to it the shallower design of denouncing even an honest admiration of the genuine old masters as an injustice to the living,[1] we cannot show better than by introducing the principal figure of the piece, Mr. Carmine, who will surely hereafter find his place among the sterling and recognised productions of English comedy, as not less deserving to live than the most glorious of the professors of the brush it was his daily occupation to produce.

Let us call him Old Master Carmine. The meanness of his original only demonstrates the greatness of his genius. It was a swindling auctioneer who first saw his brush at work on the window of a disreputable house in Goodman's-fields, scribbling in scarcely legible letters Coffee, Tea, and Chocolate. His genius soared, then, no higher than to the daubing of diabolical angels for alehouses, of dogs with chains for tanners' yards, of rounds of beef and roasted pigs for Porridge-island. But from that contemptible state he was raised by Mr. Puff, the fashionable

[1] When in one of his writings he would express his highest admiration for the painter of Marriage-à-la-Mode, he does it by the remark that the divine fervour and Promethean heat of the painter's art may be as discernible "in the comic pencil of a "Hogarth as in the serious designs "of a Raffaele."

auctioneer, to the Cat and Fiddle in Petticoat-lane, and to the Goose and Gridiron in Paul's-churchyard, the first live things he drew. And to this higher school of painting Mr. Puff's liberality introduced him, because he detected the genius that might hereafter assist him in supplying works by the old masters of a quality that should be level with the demands of public taste. Of course, therefore, Mr. Puff did not quit him there. Who but Mr. Puff recommended him to Prim Stiff, the mercer upon Ludgate-hill, so that he came to draw the Queen upon his signboard? That stroke of genius settled it, and finally Puff and Carmine entered into partnership. Carmine produced works by the old masters, and Puff disposed of them at fashionable sales. Profits were divided, and they were not small. If one of Carmine's Guidos fetched one hundred and thirty guineas, there would then be a deduction of four guineas for the frame, three for the painting, two pieces to Varnish for bidding against Squander, and Brush five for bringing Sir Tawdry Trifle, leaving one hundred and sixteen of sheer plunder to divide. Necessarily, however, before the Guido was perfected, there had been some trifling cost incurred in Mr. Carmine's dilapidated lumber-room, that best conditioned estate in the county of Middlesex which Mr. Puff had announced as its last preceding abode. "Why now," says Mr. Puff to Mr. Carmine, "there's your Susanna; it "could not have produced you above twenty at most, and "by the addition of your lumber-room dirt, and the "salutary application of the spaltham-pot, it became a "Guido worth a hundred and thirty pounds." "Sir," says Mr. Carmine to Mr. Puff, "if I do now and then add "some tincts of antiquity to my pictures, I do it in con-"descension to the foible of the world: for, Sir, age, age, "Sir, is all my pictures want to render them as good "pieces as the masters from whom they are taken; and "let me tell you, Sir, he that took my Susanna for a "Guido, gave no mighty proof of his ignorance, Mr. "Puff."

Who will doubt that this is exquisite satire, and also

legitimate comedy? But to complete Mr. Carmine, he should be shown in the manufacture of modern as well as of ancient art, nor less great in fashionable portrait-painting than at a sign-post or a Guido. Let us also introduce, therefore, a sitter of his, the wife of an alderman, Lady Pentweazel, the part which Worsdale played in the comedy. A superannuated beldame she is, gaping for flattery, like a nest of unfledged crows for food; and with them, too, gulping down everything that is offered her, no matter how coarse. She has had, as she tells Mr. Carmine, "live-born and christened—stay—don't let me lie now—"one—two—three—four—five—then I lay fallow—but "the year after I had twins—they came in Mr. Pent-"weazel's sheriffalty; then Roger, then Robin, then "Reuben"—in short, she has had twenty as fine babes as ever trod in shoe-leather. She was a Griskin, Molly Griskin was her maiden name, and all her family by the mother's side were famous, she says, for their eyes. She has a great-aunt among the beauties at Windsor, who has a sister at Hampton-court, a *perdigious* fine woman—she had but one eye indeed, but that was a piercer; that one eye got her three husbands. "We were called," Lady Pentweazel adds, "the gimblet-eyed family." Therefore she wishes that Mr. Carmine, in painting her portrait, should let her know when he comes to the eyes, that she may call up a look. She has had her day, she hints, she has had her day. And have still, Madam, flatters the artist: he shall indeed make no more difference between what she was, and what she is, than Rubens has distinguished between Mary de Medicis a virgin and a regent. "Mr. Carmine," says the lady thereupon, "I vow you are "a very judicious person; I was always said to be like "that family. When my piece was first done, the limner "did me after Venus de Medicis, which I suppose might "be one of Mary's sisters; but things must change: to "be sitting for my picture at this time of day; ha! ha! "ha!—but my daughter Sukey, you must know, is just "married to Mr. Deputy Dripping, of Candlewick-ward,

" and would not be said nay; so it is not so much for the " beauty as the similitude. Ha! ha!" No, she don't wish her figure to be done this bout, for she is only in jumps; but shall she send for her tabbys? Stop, though; here comes Mr. Puff to admire her portrait. Ha! this is it, says Mr. Puff. Impossible to err; although Mr. Carmine is generally successful, in this instance he is particularly happy: where can you meet with that mixture of fire and softness, but in the eyes of Lady Pentweazel?

" Oh, Sir!" " That clearness and delicacy of complexion, with that flow of ruddiness and health." " Sir! Sir! Sir!" " That fall of shoulders, turn of neck, set-on head, full chest, taper waist, plump ——." " Spare me, sweet Sir! Well, I profess, Sir, you are a gentleman of great discernment; and if business should bring you into the city, for, alas! what pleasure can bring a man of your refined taste there?"—" Oh, ma'am!"— " I say, Sir, if such an accident should happen, and Blowbladder-street has any charms"—" Oh! Ma'am! Ma'am! Ma'am!"— " It is not impossible but we may receive you, though not equal to your merits"—" Ma'am!" " Yet in such manner as to show our sense of them. Sir, I'm your very obedient." " Your ladyship's most"—" Not a step." " Ma'am!" " Sir——." " Ma'am!" " Sir, your most obedient." " Your devoted."

And so, in a storm of prodigious puffings and curtsyings, *exit* Lady Pentweazel.

As an actor, Foote himself did not re-enter the stage until the close of the following year, when, compelled to it doubtless by demands he could not longer supply in any other way, he played at Drury-lane the character of Sir Charles Buck in his *Englishman in Paris*, a little comedy written for Macklin and his daughter six months before, and in which they had singular success at Covent-garden. But before this re-appearance he had occupied more than usual of town-talk and gossip, of which Garrick makes jesting mention in a prologue on his return to Drury-lane. For the rival wits had met in France during the year of Foote's dissipations there, and the friendly feeling re-established between them, and already announced in the prologue to *Taste*, continued to exist unabated. Foote

would humorously relate an incident of his friend's visit to show the ups and downs of the old and new school of acting, inasmuch as the very day when Garrick was introduced to the French King was that when old Quin was robbed by a highwayman on Hampstead-heath; but for himself, he added, being neither of the old school nor the new, something between a reprobate French courtier and a reckless English highwayman would best express the notion then prevalent as to his own career. In proof of which may be quoted some lines from Garrick's prologue, spoken by Foote himself.

"Whene'er my faults or follies are the question,
Each draws his wit out, and begins dissection.
Sir Peter Primrose, smirking o'er his tea,
Sinks, from himself and politics, to me.
'Paper! boy.' 'Here, Sir, I am.' 'What news to-day?'
'Foote, Sir, is advertised.' 'What! run away?'
'No, Sir; this week he acts at Drury-lane.'
'How's that?' (cries feeble Grub). 'Foote come again!
'I thought that fool had done his devil's dance;
'Was he not hang'd some months ago in France?'"[1]

This prologue, it would seem, was encored every night; and the comedy itself had a success which, notwithstanding many clever and telling scenes, appears somewhat disproportioned to its merits, and to the more moderate success achieved by the better comedy of *Taste*. But Foote did not confine himself to his own pieces on this resumption of his place as an actor. Though the *Englishman in Paris* was played a surprising number of times, his *Ted* had often to be repeated, and the *Knights* was successfully revived with a new prologue by himself,—he also appeared many times in Fondlewife and Sir Courtly Nice, and

[1] "He had passed," says Murphy, "a great part of the preceeding summer in France. During his absence a report prevailed, and was circulated as a matter of fact in the newspapers, that Foote was condemned for some crime, and executed near Bordeaux. What gave rise to such a rumour, was never known. He arrived in London about the middle of August, and in his usual vein of humour turned the story to a joke,"—*Life of Garrick*, i. 242.

added to his list of parts Ben in Congreve's *Love for Love*, and Captain Brazen in Farquhar's *Recruiting Officer*, both which he gave repeatedly. In the following year he went to the Haymarket, and in a summer entertainment laughed at Macklin's lecturing extravagancies, and at some amusing quarrels of the ladies of the theatre, green-room squabbles of Mrs. Bellamy and Mrs. Woffington wherein certain public men were involved, that had been much the talk of the town. Then, early in the succeeding year (1756), he took an engagement at Covent-garden, where he produced, with a success far exceeding even the *Englishman in Paris*, a sequel to it with the title of the *Englishman Returned from Paris;* the object of which, as that of its predecessor had been to exhibit a sturdy young Briton in his first contact with effeminate French fripperies and fashion, was to show him now completely subdued by the same, and an object of scorn and pity to English beholders. Referring to the bills of the theatre, we find that this Covent-garden engagement occupied him from February to May, and that in the course of it he repeated many times Fondlewife, Captain Brazen, and Sir Penurious Trifle; that he added to his new parts the Lady Pentweazel of his own little comedy, and the Sir Paul Plyant of Congreve's *Double Dealer* (a character in which Wilkes, who liked his acting, thought him particularly good); and that he advertised himself for Polonius in *Hamlet*, but, before the night of performance came, lost courage and withdrew. It is manifest, however, that the grand attraction of the year was his performance of Sir Charles Buck in the two pieces satirising French morals and manners.

The subject no doubt was a popular one. We had not long been at peace with France, within three short months we were going to war again, and how better employ the interval than by keeping national animosities healthily alive? Foote was cosmopolitan enough to know better; and even these comedies, with their occasional excellent discrimination of French peculiarities, are not without large and liberal allowance for national differ-

ences; but he was writing for the English boxes, pit, and gallery, and did not care to carry his moral above the taste or comprehension of his audiences. As he left it, therefore, it remains for us to contemplate—a piece of the truth of the time, at any rate; the English view of France, and of French fashions and foibles, in 1754, from which Englishmen in 1854 may draw conclusions that would then have been downright heresy.

A Frenchman is a fop. It is their national disease. Not one of the qualities for which you celebrate them, but owes its origin to a foible. Their taste is trifling, their gaiety grimace, and their politeness pride. Not but that a short residence in France is a necessary part of every man of fashion's education. It gives him a true relish for his own domestic happiness; a proper veneration for his national liberties; a contempt for adulation; and an honour for the extended and more generous commerce of his country. The French men are all puppies, mincing and dancing, chattering and grinning; the French women, a parcel of painted dolls. Their food is only fit for hogs; and as for their language, let them learn it that like it. Travel, forsooth, is now the word; its consequence, an importation of every foreign folly; and thus the plain persons and principles of Old England are so confounded and jumbled with the excrementitious growth of every climate, that we have lost our ancient characteristic, and are become a bundle of contradictions, a piece of patchwork, a mere harlequin's coat. How frequently are substituted for national prepossessions, always harmless and often happy, guilty and unnatural prejudices! Unnatural—for the wretch who is weak and wicked enough to despise his country, sins against the most laudable law of nature; he is a traitor to the community where Providence has placed him, and should be denied those social benefits he has rendered himself unworthy to partake. As to exotic attendants, French flunkies and barbers, those instruments of our luxury, those panders to our pride, the importation of such

puppies makes a part of the politics of our old friends the French. Unable to resist us whilst we retain our ancient roughness, they have recourse to those minions, who would first, by unmanly means, sap and soften our native spirit, and then deliver us an easy prey to their employers. The moral of all which, and of the comedy, is, that as it is our happiness to be born Britons it should also be our boast, and that we cannot cherish a wholesomer belief than that French fashions are as ill suited to our genius, as French politics are pernicious to our peace.

Meanwhile Foote had not been neglecting British fashions and foibles, pretenders, politicians, or players. He has taken his former place at the Bedford,[1] and in his critical and satirical corner is again supreme. All who know him come early in the hope of being admitted of his party at supper, the less fortunate engage boxes near him, and wherever the sound of his voice is heard the table is in a roar. Since last we saw the place some new faces are there, but some familiar ones are gone. Old Macklin, weary of his doubtful successes on the stage, has taken oddly enough to another branch of public employment, having set up a tavern of his own near the Bedford, on the present site of the Tavistock-hotel, where, by the alternation of a three-shilling ordinary with a shilling lecture, at both of which he is presiding deity, he supplies at once the bodily wants and what he conceives to be the mental deficiencies of the day. He is to make everybody orators, by teaching them how to speak; and, by way of teaching them also what to speak, presents himself every other night with a discourse on some subject wherein he thinks the popular mind insufficiently informed. His range is unlimited between the literature of the ancients and the

[1] The first number of the *Connoisseur*, which was published on the last day of January in this year, thus describes the Bedford:—"This coffee-house is every night crowded with men of parts. Almost every one you meet is a polite scholar and a wit. Jokes and *bon mots* are echoed from box to box; every branch of literature is critically examined; and the merit of every production of the press, or performance of the theatres, weighed and determined."

manners of the moderns, and with the Ancient Chorus for one lecture, for its successor he will take the Irish Duel; but whatever his subject, the harvest of ridicule for Foote is unfailing. The result is that people go to hear *him* rather than the lecturer, for, it being part of the plan to invite the audience to offer hints on the subject-matter and so exhibit their progress in oratory, the witty sallies and questionings of Foote have become at last the leading attraction.

"Order!" he cried one night, that being the established mode of intimating your wish to put a question to the lecturer. "Well, Sir," said Macklin, "what have "you to say upon this subject?" The subject was the prevalence of duelling in Ireland; and the lecturer, who had begun at the earliest period of the Irish history, was now arrived at the reign of Elizabeth. "I think, Sir," said Foote, "this matter might be settled in a few words. "What o'clock is it, Sir?" Macklin could not possibly see what the clock had to do with a dissertation on duelling, but gruffly reported the hour to be half-past nine. "Very well," says Foote, "about this time of the night, "every gentleman in Ireland that can possibly afford it "is in his third bottle of claret, and therefore in a fair "way of getting drunk; and from drunkenness proceeds "quarrelling, and from quarrelling duelling, and so "there's an end of the chapter." The abridgment was so satisfactory to the audience, the hour of the night being considered, that Macklin had to shut up his antiquarian disquisition in great dudgeon.

His topic on another evening was the employment of memory in connection with the oratorical art, in the course of which, as he enlarged on the importance of exercising memory as a habit, he took occasion to say that to such perfection he had brought his own he could learn anything by rote on once hearing it. Foote waited till the conclusion of the lecture, and then, handing up the subjoined sentences, desired that Mr. Macklin would be good enough to read and afterwards repeat them from

memory. More amazing nonsense never was written. "So she went into the garden to cut a cabbage-leaf, to "make an apple-pie; and at the same time a great she-"bear, coming up the street, pops its head into the shop. "'What! no soap?' So he died, and she very impru-"dently married the barber; and there were present the "Picninnies, and the Joblillies, and the Garyulies, and "the Grand Panjandrum himself, with the little round "button at top; and they all fell to playing the game of "catch as catch can, till the gunpowder ran out at the "heels of their boots." It is needless to say that the laugh turned against old Macklin, as it has turned against many younger and livelier people since who have read these droll sentences in *Harry and Lucy*, and who, like Miss Edgeworth's little hero and heroine, after mastering the great she-bear and the no-soap, for want of knowing *who* died have never arrived at the marriage with the barber, or perhaps, even after proceeding so far, have been tripped up by the Grand Panjandrum with the little round button at top.

Such at last became the vogue of Foote's fun at these lectures that it ended, as we have said, in his establishing a summer lecture of his own for a few weeks at the Haymarket. And here it was he gave his practical illustration of the Greek Tragedy, in support of Mr. Macklin's notion that it was still applicable to modern subjects. Exhibiting London struck suddenly with mortal terror by the appearance in its streets of a highly despotic and overbearing personage, attended by a chorus of tinkers, tailors, blacksmiths, musicians, bakers, and other trades, he showed how intelligible it would be that this mysterious personage, so attended, should strut about the stage of a London theatre, brag of the unlimited extent of his power, threaten fire and sword on all sides of him for no reason on earth, and finally declare his intention of storming the Tower, enslaving the City, and dethroning the Sovereign; and with what a moving effect thereupon, the chorus of trades, terrified by such explosive threats, would naturally fall

upon their knees, tear their hair, beat their breasts, and supplicate their oppressor to spare the effusion of so much human blood', to which, after a conflict of contending passions that should without the least impression of fatigue fill up four more acts, the hero would finally agree, and bring down the curtain to a full hymn of thanksgiving for the deliverance of so many helpless human beings, and to three cheers from pit and gallery for an entertainment so happily suited to the understanding and taste of a British audience.

And thus, after such or other as ludicrous fashion, through many summer nights did Macklin's absurdities supply him theme for laughter. The Haymarket was crowded nightly; the Piazza coffee-house was shut up; poor Macklin, as "vintner, coffeeman, and chapman," made his next appearance in the London Gazette; and there is a letter of Murphy's to his brother dated April 1755, in which he says that Foote had made 500*l* in five nights by his counter-oratory to Macklin.

Arthur Murphy was among those new faces at the Bedford who had sought and obtained Foote's notice, and their acquaintance was now of some standing. No figure appears in Murphy's early letters to his friends with such sprightly and enlivening effect as that of the famous wit Mr. Foote. For example, Arthur is at Bristol in the lowest possible spirits, when there drives up to the hotel a splendid equipage, out of it springs Foote very handsomely dressed, and "while I am writing this, he is "grinning at me from a corner of the room, we have had "Mr. Punch already, and his company has lifted my "spirits, and that is what makes me go on at this rate." Or they are holiday-making together in a country-house, and Murphy is sadly preparing himself for London to get ready a number of the *Gray's Inn Journal* for press, when Foote says he need not go on that account, and, producing a French magazine, tells him he will find in it one of the prettiest oriental tales imaginable which he has but to translate and send to the printer, and Murphy takes

his advice, and so gets promoted to the notice and friendship of Johnson, whose tale it turns out to be that the French magazine had itself translated from a number of the *Rambler*. Or perhaps they are together on the first night of Murphy's *Orphan of China*, dining with Hogarth and Sir Francis Delaval at the Rose near Drury-lane, and waiting to hear the fate of the tragedy, which is supposed to have been endangered by the substitution of Mrs. Yates for Mrs. Cibber in the heroine; when a letter of Mrs. Cibber's is handed to Murphy assuring him that she is at that moment offering up her prayers for his success, which, having handed to Foote, the wit reads aloud and returns with the grave remark that "Mrs. Cibber is a Roman "Catholic, and they always pray for the dead."[1] Or it may be, that, tired of Macklin's talk about oratory, they have betaken themselves to enjoyment of the real thing, and are together in the gallery of the House of Commons when Pitt is putting forth all his powers in an attack upon Murray. "Shall we go home now?" says Murphy, as he afterwards told the story to Mr. Rogers. "No," replies Foote; "let "us wait till he has made the little man" (Murray) "vanish entirely."

Thus cordially began an acquaintance which seems to have continued with but few and slight intermissions; one of which, however, dates at the production of the *Englishman Returned from Paris*, when Murphy unreasonably complained of Foote's having founded it upon a suggestion of his, as though the original suggestion of the *Englishman in Paris* did not entitle its author to the unquestioned right of himself working out and completing any hint proceeding from it. Nevertheless, Murphy persisted in putting forward a Sir Charles Buck of his own; and when the public would have nothing to say to him, he revenged himself by enlivening his future comedies, whenever he could, by pilfering as many as possible of those witticisms of which the public thus showed their preference. Indeed

[1] Murphy tells the story himself in his *Life of Garrick*, i. 340-1.

he put Foote himself, and not a few of his good things, bodily into a play not many months after he died, and even then had not forgotten his contemptible supposed grievance. "He has wit to ridicule you," says Bygrove to Dashwood in *Know Your Own Mind*, "invention to "frame a story of you, humour to help it about; and "when he has set the town a laughing, he puts on a "familiar air, and shakes you by the hand." After his own death, too, his executor found among his papers this outline of an imaginary scene in which he proposed to have introduced the failings of his old friend. "Foote "gives a dinner—large company—characters come one "by one:—sketches them as they come:—each enters— "he glad to see each. At dinner, his wit, affectation, "pride; his expense, his plate, his jokes, his stories;— "all laugh;—all go, one by one—all abused, one by "one;—his toadeaters stay;—he praises himself—in a "passion against all the world." We have here perhaps the very worst, to set against the best, that was to be said against Foote by those who most intimately knew him.

It may remind us that what has been held to be one of his most grave offences dates at this time. He began an engagement with Garrick at Drury-lane in September 1756, and, after playing several of his own characters and of Congreve's, produced on the 5th February 1757 his little comedy of the *Author*. It was admirably written; it contained the outline of a story which would have tasked only a little more patience than Foote's to give a masterly completeness to (the father's return in disguise to test the honour of his son was a hint for Sheridan); and it was rich in character. Very creditable also was the spirit in which it dealt with the claims of Authorship to higher esteem, and to a better kind of patronage, than it was the fashion of those days to award to it; and perhaps many an author whom its title attracted to Drury-lane crept back to his garret not ungrateful to the laughing comedian.

And here, before describing the offence just hinted at,

we may interpose the remark that this feeling in Foote was an honest one, and that in his writings there is never any disguise of the man, where such disclosure may properly be made. Indeed of all their characteristics there is none so marked as the absence of any sort of pretence either in language or sentiment. When serious, you perceive that he means to be so; just as, when he laughs, he leaves you in no doubt as to that. There is no mere face-making in either case. He is an avowed satirist, and this must always detract from the pleasure he might otherwise give; more especially as the subjects of his satire for the most part necessitate the treatment implied in the remark of the French wit, that to give a Muscovite a sensation you must flay him alive. But we repeat our conviction that in the main it is honest satire, and that its force with his contemporaries lay precisely in that truth and reality of it. In this direction he is always strong. His scenes and subjects are often trivial in the extreme, but are yet held together by the vividness and bustle of something actual going on in them. No one who now carefully reads them can have any surprise at their success, or any feeling but regret that they dealt so much with what is transitory. As mere examples of comic dialogue they are perfect. Within a more limited range they have not much less than the wit, and they have more than the character, of Congreve. His people are not to be mistaken when you have once made their acquaintance; for they retain always so perfectly the trick of talk by which you knew them first, that perhaps no dramatic writings might be read aloud so easily without repetition of the speakers' names. Their great fault is the haste and impatience which has left them often a mere succession of witty scenes, when with a little more labour, and no more invention, a developed plot would have given more consistency and completeness even to the characters. But when he had once had his laugh, he was too easily satisfied; and, partly because of the restriction of his theatre to a summer fare lighter than

that of the winter houses, partly because of his own careless temperament, he was too ready to throw away upon a farcical sketch what would have supplied, to his friend Murphy for example, matter for elaborate comedies. The comparison of him with Aristophanes is absurd, because he had nothing of the imagination, or wealth of poetry, of the Greek; but he was like him in wit, whim, ready humour, practical jokes, keen sarcasm, vivid personation, and above all in the unflinching audacity with which he employed all these in scorn and ridicule of living vices and hypocrisies. As it was said of the Greek satirist that he exercised a censorship more formidable than the archon's, hardly less is to be said of the English wit who took a range of jurisdiction wider than Sir John Fielding's or Sir Thomas de Veil's; and for all the vast difference that remains, it is perhaps little less or more than between Athens in the age of Pericles and London in the time of Bubb Dodington. To find ourselves again in the thick of a not very dignified age, we have but to read Foote's comedies and farces; and though it was a grander thing no doubt to have such subjects for satire as a cowardly Bacchus or a gormandizing Hercules, veritable Gods to pull to pieces, yet among the sham divinities who received the Londoner's worship, or had the disposition of his fortunes, there was food enough for laughter and exposure. "Virgil had his Pollio," says Foote's poor author, "Horace his Mæcenas, Martial "his Pliny; but my protector is Mr. Vamp." And who was Mr. Vamp that thus protected poor Master Cape?

You may hear him bragging of his protective powers, as he first enters the scene. Old Vamp would not have kept a shop so long at the Turnstile if he did not know how to be secret. Why, in the year forty-five, when he was in the treasonable way, he never squeaked. He never gave up but one author in his life, and he was dying of consumption, so it never came to a trial. Look at the other side of his head; cropped close!—bare as a board!—and

for nothing in the world but an innocent book of indecency, as he is a Christian! Oh! the laws are very hard, very severe upon his brotherhood. But gad so! he must mind business, though. Master Cape here must provide him with three taking titles for these pamphlets, and let him think of a pat Latin motto for the largest. Books are like women; to strike, they must be well dressed; fine feathers make fine birds; a good paper, an elegant type, a handsome motto, a catching title, has driven many a dull treatise through three editions. Did any one here know Harry Handy? He was a pretty fellow: he had his Latin *ad anguem*, as they say: he would have turned you a fable of Dryden's or an epistle of Pope's into Latin verse in a twinkling: except Peter Hasty the voyage-writer, he was as great a loss to the trade as any within old Vamp's memory. He was hanged for clipping and coining, but Vamp perhaps wasn't a loser by his death. His execution made a noise, and sold the booksellers seven hundred of his translations, besides his last dying speech and confession; and Vamp got *that*. For Harry was mindful of his friends in his last moments; he was a pretty fellow. About the spring Mr. Vamp will deal with Master Cape for a couple of volumes in octavo. Master Cape knows what will do? Novels, now, are a pretty light summer reading, and do very well at Tunbridge, Bristol, and the other watering-places; no bad commodity, neither, for the West-India trade; so let 'em be novels, Master Cape. No, the newspaper still hangs fire that was to have been started by Vamp and Titlepage. It promised uncommonly well. They got a young Cantab for the essays, for the true intelligence they imported an historian from Aberdeen, and they had made sure of an attorney's clerk; but it dropped for want of a politician. Was there an opening in that capacity for Master Cape? "No, thank you, master Cape," says Vamp; "in half a year's time, I have a grandson of my own that "will come in. He is now in training as a waiter at the "Cocoa-tree Coffee-house; I intend giving him the run

" of Jonathan's for three months, to understand trade and " the funds, and then I'll start him."

But notwithstanding his work for old Vamp, Foote's author is a pretty fellow in a better than either the Handy or the Hasty school. He is a gentleman. He refuses to defend a colonial government which had proved highly profitable to its governor in everything but good name (Lord Pigot had just published an immense got-up quarto in defence of his administration in India), because, he says, though he is the servant of the public, he is not the prostitute of its masters, and, as he has never dipped his pen into gall to gratify popular or private resentments, its integrity shall not now be sacrificed to palliate guilt or flatter pride. Yet to his pen he owes all his subsistence. I am sure my heart bleeds for him, says an honest fellow in the play. Consider to what temptations he is exposed. Lack-a-day, learning, learning, Sir, is no commodity for this market; nothing makes money here, Sir, *but* money, or some certain fashionable qualities that a good man would not wish to possess. Patron! the word has lost its use. A guinea subscription at the request of a lady, whose chambermaid is acquainted with the author, is all that may now and then be picked up. Protectors! Why, one dares believe there's more money laid out upon Islington turnpike-road in a month, than upon all the learned men in Great Britain in seven years. Where now are the Oxfords and Halifaxes?

And then Foote introduced Mr. Cadwallader, the part which he played himself. Here was something in default of the Oxfords or Halifaxes. Next to a peer Mr. Cadwallader honours a poet, though Mr. Capè was the first he ever had in his house except the bellman for a Christmas-box. His ruling passion is to know any notable body, but otherwise he is made up of contrarieties. Pride and meanness contend for him one minute, folly and archness the next. In one breath he tells you, that he'd have made an immense figure in the learned world but for his cursed fool of a guardian's

neglect of his education; and in the next, that the only use of a school is, hey! egad! for children to make acquaintances that may hereafter be useful to them, "for between you and me what they learn there does "not signify twopence." Always bragging of his pedigree, he'll yet mix with anybody in his greed for notoriety; and, claiming to take the wall of a prince of the blood, may be seen eating fried sausages at the Mews-gate. When, on the first night of the comedy, Foote entered in this character, a great shout of surprise broke forth at the completeness with which he had dropped his own identity. He had dressed himself out very large, and he came on with a broad unmeaning stare and an awkward step, looking less encumbered with even corpulence than with conceit, talking boisterously yet indistinctly, his voice loud but incoherent, his head always in a restless fidget to his left shoulder, his mouth constantly open as if to recall some shrewdness or some folly he had not meant to say, and with a trick every now and then of sucking his wrist with a sort of *supping* noise. But the laughing cry of doubt whether it could be Foote, took a more extravagant turn as the audience became unexpectedly conscious of a figure looking on from the boxes at what seemed a double of itself, and shaking with hearty fun at Mr. Cadwallader's introduction of his wife:

".Oh! lord, Mr. Cape, this is Becky; my dear Becky, child, this is a great poet—ah, but she does not know what that is—a little, foolish or so, but of a very good family—here, Becky, child, won't you ask Mr. Cape to come and see you? Ecod, do, Cape, come and look at her grotto and shells, and see what she has got.—Well, he'll come, Beck.—Ecod, do, and she'll come to the third night of your tragedy, won't you, Beck?—is'nt she a fine girl? humour her a little, do;—hey, Beck; he says you are as fine a woman as ever he—ecod who knows but he may make a copy of verses on you?—there, go and have a little chat with her, talk any nonsense to her, no matter what; she's a great fool, and won't know the difference."

The living original of the character, Mr. Ap-Rice, a

Welshman of large fortune with whom Foote had been on terms of intimacy, had actually and in sober truth gone to see himself produced upon the stage by his quondam guest; and, says Davies, "while loud bursts of laughter "from the boxes repeatedly acknowledged the writer's and "the actor's skill, the best of it was, that the gentleman "himself made one of the audience, enjoyed the jest "very heartily, and applauded Mr. Foote for drawing his "portrait so admirably well."

This Socratic state of mind, however, did not to the last remain Mr. Ap-Rice's friend. The *Author* ran through the rest of Garrick's season, and became greatly popular. Kitty Clive's Becky was a companion picture to Foote's Cadwallader, which in its kind, Horace Walpole says, the stage had never equalled; and both took the piece for their benefit at the end of the season, Foote reviving on the same night Dryden's *Spanish Fryar* and playing the part of Gomez. Thus far Mr. Ap-Rice's philosophy had not worn out. But when he found that the closing of the theatre did not close the laugh against him, but that, while Foote had carried his other self to Dublin, he could never show his proper self in any public place, park, assembly, or coffee-house, without loud whispers of *Cadwallader!* and secret laughter and pointing, he laid aside the philosopher, took counsel with his friends, and, on the wit's return and resumption of the part at Drury-lane, after consulting Garrick whether or not he should fight him,[1] finally resolved to move the powers of the Lord Chamberlain against him. He was a man whose influence corresponded to his wealth, and he succeeded. It is curious enough that the prohibition of any future performance of the comedy, by the Duke of Devonshire, reached Drury-lane on the morning of the night appointed

[1] Garrick's advice gives us at once a laughable idea of Mr. Ap-Rice's size and eccentricity, and of Foote's quickness. Lord Holland told Mr. Moore that when the propriety of challenging Foote was submitted to Garrick, all he said was, "My dear "Sir, don't think of doing any such "thing; why, he would shoot you "through the guts before you had "supped two oysters off your wrist."

for Foote's benefit, when he and Kitty Clive were to have appeared in Cadwallader and Becky, after acting Shylock and Portia; and though, in accounting for the enforced change, he addressed the audience with great spirit against the edict of the Chamberlain, of course it prevailed, and the *Author* was suppressed.

The suppression was made the most of, by Foote's enemies; but that even those who enforced the law took no very grave view of the offence, appeared in the same Lord Chamberlain's concession to him soon after of a licence for the Haymarket, and in the marked acknowledgment made for that service in the dedication of his comedy of the *Minor*. Here he describes the many gloomy apprehensions inspired by the stage-licensing Act; hints at the wrongs the poor players expected from it; and says that when "its direction was lodged in the hands of a "nobleman, whose ancestors had so successfully strug-"gled for national liberty, they ceased to fear for their "own." It was not from a patron of the liberal arts they were to expect an oppressor, it was not from the friend of freedom and of man they were to dread partial monopolies or the establishment of petty tyrannies. And he then thanks the Duke of Devonshire for having thrown open, on the borders of Parnassus, a cottage for those who had no ambition to enter its palaces. The first use he made of this cottage was to furnish it with the *Minor*, the original draft of which had already been played in Dublin with a reception so doubtful, that all his friends warned him against persisting in a satire that trenched on such delicate ground. But he was not the man to run away in fright at a hiss, which on that occasion told him nothing more than that his blow was hitting hard and its aim was true; and making use of the failure, therefore, but as a means to greater success, he strengthened the plot, introduced new characters, and, on his return to London to open his newly-licensed Haymarket, produced fearlessly this masterpiece of wit.

But before describing it, some account of that visit to

Dublin should have mention, because Tate Wilkinson first publicly appeared there with Foote. The son of a preacher who had made himself very popular at the chapel of the Savoy, and who, presuming on the supposed privilege of the place, granted licences in defiance of the Marriage-act, was transported for the offence, and had to leave his wife and son to what charity they could find,—the lad had long been oscillating between the playhouse and the meeting-house, before Shuter picked him up one day at Whitfield's tabernacle, and took him to Garrick. At the interview he imitated Foote so cleverly, that the result was an engagement of thirty shillings a week for small business at Drury-lane; but, by the same introduction on a day not long after, he imitated Garrick to Foote with so much greater effect, that it produced an offer to accompany the latter to Dublin and take part in his own engagement. And when, long years afterward, the old man wrote his memoirs, he remembered with what eager joy, when the time to go to Dublin came, he waited on Mr. Foote at the Bedford; and how, in one hour after, they set off in a post-chaise, with Mr. Foote's servant on horseback; and how they only travelled that night to his little cottage at Elstree in Hertfordshire, though they afterwards travelled together post to Holyhead; and how, when Mr. Foote overtook upon the road great people that he knew, and who would have had him join them, he always declined, and managed instead to be half a day before or behind ("for," says he, "with all their politeness, they expect the "best accommodation, or, if they offer you preference, "you cannot in policy or good manners accept it"); and how, finally, when they had embarked at Holyhead, there was a great storm, and the cabin was crowded, and poor young Tate was very ill, yet "Mr. Foote was well, and "walking most of the night from place to place."

Truth to say, indeed, that little glimpse back into the Dublin journey is one of the few passages in Tate Wilkinson's *Memoirs* or his *Wandering Patentee*, full as they are of allusion to the great wit and mimic, where we find

anything characteristic or real. In the rest of the nine volumes, little more is discoverable than the egregious self-flattery of a vain old actor, who, even while his every page bears unconscious admission that but for Foote his own name could never have been heard of, is yet so bewildered with conceit and uncontrolled managerial ways, that in the man who had thus made him wholly what he was, and on whose brains he lived all his life, he would but querulously show you the mimic who could not endure himself to be mimicked, and the author who never displayed enough gratitude to the actor who helped him by his personations. It would be almost incredible that these books should exhibit so few entertaining traces of long years of intimate connection with such a humourist as Foote, but that it is with men of intellect as with the world itself—they contain what you can find in them, neither less nor more; and a man who carries nothing of the gentleman or the wit in himself, will quite vainly attempt to hit off a wit's or a gentleman's likeness. Wilkinson never saw anything in Foote but the sharp high voice, the quick look and laugh, the comical strut and scrape, the whimsical twitch of the chin, which he found it so advantageous to imitate; and Churchill, impatient always of his brother satirist, struck at him behind his shadow.

> "Strange to relate, but wonderfully true,
> That even shadows have their shadows too!
> With not a single comic power endued,
> This man a mere mere mimic's mimic stood."

That occasionally, however, the mimickry of mimickry, or the pretence to be a pretender, was found more profitable than his own calling even to the original mimic, a curious and little known incident of this particular visit to Dublin may serve to show. While he was acting before the public with Wilkinson in the theatre, he appears to have been carrying on, out of sight of the public but not less with their connivance, another kind

of acting equally profitable. A letter from Dublin, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1758, is our authority for this odd adventure. "I suppose you have heard "of the famous comedian Mr. Foote. He is in this "town at this time, and he is a man of much humour. "He took it into his head to take a private lodging in a "remote part of the town in order to set up the lucrative "business of fortune-telling. After he had got his room "hung with black, and his dark lantern, together with "such people about him as knew the people of fashion in "this great city, he gave out handbills, to let them know "that there was a man to be met with at such a place "who wrote down people's fortunes, without asking them "any questions. As his room was quite dark (the light "from his lantern excepted) he was in less danger of "being discovered: so that he carried on the deception "with great success for many days; insomuch, that he is "said to have cleared 30*l.* a day at 2*s.* 6*d.* a head." There seems to be no room for doubt that Foote actually did this; and the readers of Edgeworth's Life will remember that Sir Francis Delaval had done the same thing in London when supposed to be in hiding for debt, which probably suggested it to his friend.

The mimic mimicked at the theatre, meanwhile, or the spectacle of Foote taken off by Wilkinson, had proved a considerable attraction in Dublin; for though Foote played Bayes, Sir Penurious, Fondlewife, Buck, and Cadwallader, he was in nothing more successful than in his *Tea* with Wilkinson for his pupil; and when the latter unexpectedly threw in his imitation of the imitator, the audience insisted on its repetition, and more than once, notwithstanding Foote's well-understood dislike, compelled *Tea* to be substituted for the entertainment offered in the bills. The same popularity attended it at Drury-lane in the brief season which closed with the prohibition of Mr. Cadwallader; and when, after a successful trip to Edinburgh, Foote returned with Wilkinson to the Irish capital in the winter of 1759-60, he played the round of

all his parts with the addition of Shylock and Don Lewis (in *Love makes a Man*), and still found the *Tea* and the *Diversions* most followed. But by this time his pupil's head had been a little turned, and Mr. Wilkinson no longer makes any attempt to conceal his surprise that Mr. Foote should pass his time so exclusively with great people while he is himself in a garret. The reception Foote enjoyed both at the Castle and at the first private tables is enlarged upon by Cooke also; but besides his wit he had other claims, for the Duke of Bedford was now Lord-Lieutenant, and the Duke's jovial Mr. Rigby was Foote's old friend, and to him were rehearsed the chief scenes of the *Minor* before the attempt at its representation was made. It failed, as we have said, and Foote came over to London in some ill-humour, with the shouts and hisses of the conventicle in his ears, but bent upon re-opening his battery against it, and to strike at Methodism in its stronghold.

At the Bedford soon after, Murphy saw him; "dashing "away at everybody and everything," and so describes him to Garrick in a letter which hits off perhaps even something of the manner of his conversational ridicule. "Have you had good success in Dublin, Mr. Foote?" "Pooh! hang them. There was not a shilling in the "country, except what the Duke of Bedford, and I, and "Mr. Rigby, have brought away. Woodward is cater-"wauling among 'em, and Barry like a wounded snake, "and Mossop sprawling about his broken arms with the "rising of the lights, &c." "But what of your comedy, "Mr. Foote? We hear you found it dangerous to "ridicule what is said in a church?" His answer may be given in justice to himself, as a specimen of the kind of reasoning in which he uniformly indulged; but of course it will be taken, by the reader, only *valeat quantum*. "Why should I find it dangerous to ridicule "what is said in a church," replied Foote, "if what is "said there deserves ridicule? Is not the crime the "greater if you pick a pocket at church; and is the addi-"tional reason why a man should *not* have done it, to be

" the only argument why he should not be punished for " doing it? You call profaneness an offence; you will not " have ignorant men idly invoke the name or the attri- " butes of the Supreme; and may not I ridicule a fanatic " whom I think mischievous, because he is for ever pollut- " ing that name with blasphemous nonsense, mixing with " the highest the meanest and most trivial things, degrad- " ing Providence to every low and vulgar occasion of life, " crying out that he is buffeted by Satan if only bit by " fleas, and, when able to catch them, triumphing with " texts of Scripture over the blessing specially vouch- " safed."

Manifest exaggeration might seem to be here indulged, yet letters of Whitfield had then been published beside which even this is but tame satire, and, perhaps not a little for that very reason, the writer now ruled over audiences greater than any that either Foote or Garrick ever brought together. He had but lately edified twelve thousand people on Hampton-common, assembled to see a man hung in chains. At a vast collection of sports and puppet-shows in Moorfields, in an area filled by thirty thousand souls, his voice had been heard above drummers and trumpeters, above players and wild beasts, denouncing such idle and lying vanities. He and his cartloads of followers had taken forcible possession of the stage at country fairs, and had scared whole villages from their customary mirth by invoking against it the doom and the judgment. He stood by a worthless criminal on the public scaffold, one Gibson, who after condemnation had embraced Methodism, and he told the thousands assembled to see him and another culprit hanged, that only by abandoning their mirth and stage-plays, and taking refuge from such temptations in the Tabernacle, could they ever hope to go to heaven as Gibson had done that day; nay, as had even been the happiness of the wretch hanged by his side, though but for the virtue of having touched his garment. Beyond all doubt we now know, what his contemporaries not so certainly knew, that he was a sincere man, as he was

undoubtedly a man of extraordinary power; and it is not to be questioned that what the Pusey and Newman agitation have been trying vainly in our days to effect for the High Church, he really did effect for the Low, making religion vital in the direction of Calvinism; but with every allowance for the excellence of his intention, and for the real good which in spite, or by virtue, of his extravagance he effected, can we honestly approve of the administering of such stimulants as these? At the Tabernacle itself, in Tottenham-court-road, his sermons now offered daily and weekly dram-drinking such as none of the theatres could provide; and in the crowds that such stimulants excited were found people of every condition. The wealthy and the wise were there, as well as the ignorant and the poor; the low and infamous in either sex, jostled against maids of honour and lords of the bed-chamber; and "among his "frequent hearers," says Sir James Stephen, the most intelligent and admiring of all the witnesses to his fame, "were "Foote and Garrick, who brought away the characteristic "and very just remark that his oratory was never at its "full height till he had repeated a discourse forty times."

But what Foote besides had brought away was now to be seen. Alluring as the subject might appear, very few were the batteries of ridicule that had yet been opened against Whitfield. The Chesterfields and Walpoles confined their scorn to their private letters, though Horace, apprehensive of "a reign of fanatics," would have had the Church publicly "fight and ridicule him;" but even the Church did not dare to do more than expel now and then, from either University, a small batch of his ultra-zealous young disciples. He was now to receive, however, the heaviest blow yet dealt to him. In an earlier part of his career, he had paraded the humility with which he took unresistingly over his shoulders the furious lashes of a cart-whip, wielded by a merryandrew at Bartholomew fair; but the stripes inflicted by the *Minor* on Mr. Squintum, were to leave deeper marks and a less Christian temper.

The purpose and point of Foote's satire turned upon those characters of notorious infamy whom Whitfield's ill-regulated frenzy so rejoiced to send in ecstacies to heaven. He desired to show how little surprising it was that such preachers should have plenty of proselytes, who had the advantage of so comfortably blending the hitherto jarring interests of this world and the world beyond; and he looked around him for the worst type of an abominable hypocrite, who, tottering under the load of irreverend age and infamous diseases, might yet have found encouragement at the Tabernacle, from its prostitution of holy texts to unholy use, to proceed inflexibly in the practice of every vice with the safe assurance of landing in heaven at last. And this he found in Mrs. Cole, whom he introduces as still of the Piazza in Covent-garden, but mortally altered of late years, poor gentlewoman; wrapped up in flannels now; all over the rheumatize; and seductive only in the direction of the Tabernacle, whither she was yesterday heard to tempt one young man to go along with her and be converted, by the bribe of a book of hymns and a dram. For she is at last an edified member of Mr. Squintum's congregation. Her time is come. She has proved how true it is that all shall have their call, as the dear man says, sooner or later. Oh! mercy on her, if the twinges were not so bad, she could tell better why she is so easy in her conscience. It is her old disorder. Yes, yes, she is worn out, thrown by and forgotten, like a tattered garment, as Mr. Squintum says. Perhaps Sir George will look in. What will become of the house when she is gone, Heaven knows. No; when people are missed, then they are mourned. Sixteen years has she lived in the Garden, comfortably and creditably, and, though she says it, could have got bail any hour of the day. Sixteen did she say?—ay, eighteen years has she paid scot and lot in the parish of St. Paul's, and during the whole time nobody has said, Mrs. Cole, why do you so? Unless twice that she was before Sir Thomas de Veil, and three times in the round-house. It is a comfort after all to think one

has passed through the world with credit and character. Yes, it was ever since her last visitation of the gout that the heavenly change had been wrought in her. Upon her first fit she began to have her doubts and her warnings; but she was lost in a labyrinth, and nobody to show her the road. One time she thought of dying a Roman, which is truly a comfortable communion enough for one of her sort; but it would not do. Why not? Why, look you, she went one summer over to Boulogne to repent, and would you believe it, the bare-footed bald-pated beggars would not give her absolution without she quitted her business!

These are but the most slight and most distant hints of the satire, but they show its terrible and unsparing tone; and not content with giving the character all the force it could derive from his own acting, though with it he doubled Mr. Smirk, he also spoke an Epilogue in the character of Whitfield, whom he dressed at and imitated to the life. The instant success was unexampled. After the first night further opposition was quelled, and it ran that season continuously through more than forty performances. "I went two or three nights," says Tate Wilkinson, "but with great difficulty got admittance, the crowds "to see it were so numerous." The season having closed, it was carried to Drury-lane, though not without a determined effort there to intercept it by authority. "Did I "tell you," writes Walpole to Montague, "that the Arch-"bishop" (Thomas Secker was then the primate) "tried "to hinder the *Minor* from being played at Drury-lane? "For once the Duke of Devonshire was firm, and would "only let him correct some passages, and even of those "the Duke has restored some. Foote says he will take "out a licence to preach Tam Cant against Tom Cant." An existing letter of the Lord Chamberlain's confirms this, but shows that the Archbishop declined to correct or alter any specific passages. "His Grace," writes the Duke from Chatsworth to Garrick, "would have autho-"rised me to use his name to stop the *Minor*, but I got

" off from it." Then, after stating that he had sent to Foote, through Mr. Pelham, a recommendation to alter some passages liable to objection, he adds, "his Grace " would not point them out, so I think very little altera- " tion may do. This to yourself: let me hear what has " passed." The real truth was, not only that the satire was generally felt to be of a kind that under decorous protest might be expected to do far more good than harm, but that the most dignified and decorous of the protesters were afraid of meddling with the satirist. When the good-natured Secker was afterwards asked why he had not acted on the Lord Chamberlain's suggestion of altering any passages he disapproved, he quietly replied that he had no wish to see an edition of the *Minor* announced by the author as "corrected and prepared for the press by " his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury."

Certain it is that such friends of Whitfield's as had the courage to risk encounter with Foote came off worsted from the conflict. His *Letter to the Reverend Author of Remarks Critical and Christian on the Minor* is a masterpiece of controversial writing, which, if all his other works had perished, would conclusively have established his wit, sense, and scholarly feeling, as of a rare order. Every line tells. Actors will find nowhere in the language a happier defence of the stage, and all scholars may admire the learning and modesty with which, rejecting for himself any comparison with Aristophanes, he rebukes the insolent ignorance which could find only malice and barbarity in such a writer and such an age. " That was " the time when the Attic genius triumphed; when its " liberty was pure and virtuous; when a citizen would " have gone from a conference with Socrates to an oration " by Demosthenes, and have closed his evening with the " Electra of Sophocles, the Phædra of Euripides, the " moral scenes of Menander, or the sprightly comic music " of Aristophanes." The exactness of his own scholarship, we may admit, is here a little at fault. The Phædra of Euripides startles us somewhat; and if he meant

really that Socrates, Menander, and Demosthenes, might have been heard by the same citizen in the same day, he would doubtless have been mightily troubled to establish that amazing proposition. But an accomplished scholar has reminded us that men whose scholarship is undoubted have committed anachronisms of the same description, and that Cumberland, who was certainly a good Grecian, makes a confusion nearly as great in the Greek dream he narrates in the *Observer*. The same learned authority has indeed also assured us that our faith in Foote's scholarship is no delusion. With Barnard, the Provost of Eton, Foote was very intimate, and assisted him always in the private theatricals which that worthy provost, who was extremely fond of acting, used to get up in the Lodge. At these several of the collegers used to perform, and among the prominent actors were Porson and Goodall. Another great favourite with Barnard at the time, for his acting propensities, was a reverend old gentleman, well-known in living memory at Eton, the father of a late lower master there, Mr. H. Knapp, whom Barnard would reward by inviting to dinner to meet Foote, and who vividly remembered, and would often imitate, the great wit and comedian on those occasions performing scenes from Aristophanes, with singular cleverness, and in the original Greek.

But we have wandered a little from the defence of the *Minor*, which, apart from the learning or ability displayed in it, has other and high claims to consideration. Whatever our modes of life or our measure of scholarship may be, we should read still, with an interest practically appealing to us all, the argument of this admirable pamphlet in favour of public amusements and against the zeal that would abolish them on the ground of occasional excess. "What institution, human or divine," asks Foote, "has "not been perverted by bad men to bad purposes? I wish "we had not a notorious instance before us. Men have "been drunk with wine: must then every vine be "destroyed? Religion has been made a cloak for de-"bauchery and fraud: must we then extirpate all religion?

"While there are such cities in the world as London, "amusements must be found out, as occupation for the "idle, and relaxation for the active. All that sound "policy can do is, to take care that such only shall be "established, as are, if not useful in their tendency, at "least harmless in their consequence."

Of the scholarship and sense we have so highly praised, the reader will infer somewhat from even these brief sentences; and by the parallel between Thespis in his cart and Whitfield in his (for in a cart, says Foote, "even "though it be with a criminal at Tyburn, our reverend "friend most likes to show off his abilities") the wit might to some extent be shown; but our space will not permit us to add more than Foote's retort upon his reverend assailant for describing the *Minor* as a farce, and "played as it is said by authority." "Authority," he repeats, "ay, authority! What! do you suppose that I "play, as you preach, upon my own authority? No, Sir, "religion turned into a farce is, by the constitution of "this country, the only species of the drama that may be "exhibited for money without permission." His own production he then vindicates from the contemptuous designation. Comedy he defines to be an exact representation of the peculiar manners of that people among whom it happens to be performed; and he declares its province to be to punish folly as the State punishes crime, by making its faithful ridicule of particular offenders an example to the entire community. This, he continues, he had aimed at in the *Minor;* and believing its characters to be not strained above the modesty of nature, nor the treatment of them unsuitable or inconsistent, "it is not," he adds, "the extent, but the objects of a piece, that must "establish its title: a poem of one act may prove an "excellent comedy, and a play of five a most execrable "farce."

Foote was thoroughly justified in thus manfully speaking of his work. Its three acts are worth almost any five we know. Overflowing with wit and good writing, there

is also a serious and pathetic interest in them, as Holcroft found when they supplied him with his plot for the *Deserted Daughter;* and there is character in such wonderful variety, that Sheridan was able to carry quietly off from it (a liberty he often took with Foote) what was then never missed out of its abundance. For who, notwithstanding differences of appearance and race, can fail to see hints of Little Moses and his friend Premium in that small wrinkled old fellow in a threadbare coat who sits every morning, from twelve till two, in the left corner of Lloyd's Coffee-house, and every evening, from five till eight, under the clock of the Temple Exchange? He is little Transfer the broker. You may know him in a minute by his shamble, his withered face, his bit of purple nose, his cautionary stammer, and sleek silver head. He will dine and sup to any extent with you, and after all not lend you a stiver. But he has a friend that can lend, "a hard man, Master Loader," an unconscionable dog, wanting so much for interest, and so much for premium, and so much for insuring your life, and so much for risk; and when all's done you must take part of the money in money's worth, "ten casks of whale "blubber, a large cargo of Dantzic dowlas, a curious "'sortment of Birmingham hafts and Whitney blankets "for exportation, and a hundred tun of fine old hay, only "damaged a little last winter for want of thatching." And besides little Transfer, there is the brisk Mr. Smirk, successor to that truly great man Mr. Prig, introduced into *Taste* ("I remember they took him off at the play-"house some time ago; *pleasant but wrong.*[1] Public "characters should not be sported with—they are "sacred"), whom the Duchess of Dupe and all the great people so condescendingly encouraged on his praiseworthy attempt to fill the place of his jewel of a predecessor.

[1] Foote, as we have said, played Smirk as well as Mrs. Cole, and Lord Holland used to say that, according to the report of those who heard it, nothing could equal the whimsical humour with which he gave these words—"pleasant but wrong." It was as if he were pointing the comment on his own life.

" Her grace indeed gave me great encouragement. I " overheard her whisper to Lady Dy, Upon my word, " Mr. Smirk does it very well. Very well, indeed, " Mr. Smirk, addressing herself to me."

Excellently worthy of mention, too, is Sam Shift the mimic, who was indebted for his ultimate rise in life to a greater mimic, but whose first experiences, meanwhile, dated from the Magpie and Horseshoe in Fetter-lane, and his first knowledge of the world from the avenues of the playhouse: where, leaning on his extinguished link, he learned dexterity from pickpockets, connivance from constables, politics and fashions from footmen, and the art of making and breaking a promise from their masters. " *Here sirrah! light me across the kennel.* I hope your " honour will remember poor Jack! *You ragged rascal, I* " *have no halfpence, I'll pay you the next time I see you!* " But, lack-a-day, Sir, that time I saw as seldom as his " tradesmen." Yet the lad's merit, like his link, at last threw a radiance around him, and he got to be a candle-snuffer at Drury-lane: till one night, as he discharged his duties before the audience, he was hit with a crab-apple in his right eye by a patriot gingerbread-baker from the Borough, who would not suffer three dancers from Switzerland because he hated the French;[1] and from its effects he was only relieved by the compassion of the greater mimic just mentioned, a whimsical man who took him into his service, and with whom he remained till, thinking himself nearly equal to his master, he made him one of his own bows and set up for himself. All which Foote designed for a laugh at Tate Wilkinson, who just before had set up for himself at Covent-garden, on an engagement expressly to imitate his old chief; and in Shift's querulous complaining of the insufficiency of his rewards,

[1] An allusion to a riot at Drury-lane in November, 1755, when the King went to see a spectacle on which Garrick had lavished a large expenditure, but from which the audience, notwithstanding the King's presence, insisted on the withdrawal of certain Swiss and Italian dancers, whom no persuasion could induce them to believe as belonging to any nation but France, with which at the time we were at war.

Foote's keen knowledge of character exactly anticipated, by some half-century or so, the old man's revelations of himself. "And what shall I get for my pains? The old "fellow here talks of making me easy for life. Easy! "And what does he mean by easy? He'll make me an "exciseman, I suppose, and so, with an ink-horn at my "button-hole, and a taper switch in my hand, I shall run "about gauging of beer barrels. No, that will never do." Alas, that precisely what never would have done for Mr. Shift, had to do, something less than thirty years later, for the greatest poet of that century!

To depict the most present life of the time, to catch the living manners as they rose, was the uniform aim in all these various characters. For in what thus might be called local or temporary, we have seen that Foote held the entertainment and uses of Comedy to consist; and though he did not always see quite clearly enough the distinction between a portrait of which you must know the features before you are interested in the likeness, and one of which the features at once reveal their affinity to what constitutes our interest in the whole family of man, it is yet surprising with what skill he can sketch general characteristics in particular forms, and show you the passing society and manners of a period in seeming simply to fix upon his canvas one or two of its isolated figures. Nothing in this respect can be more admirable or true than the family of the Wealthys in this little comedy. You look at them as you would at a picture by Hogarth.

You see the two prosperous and elderly brothers, Sir William and Mr. Richard, suddenly finding a generation that they understood not, growing up around them. In or about the year when Mr. Richard dated his indentures, the sleek, crop-eared 'prentice used to dangle after his mistress, with the great Bible under his arm, to St. Bride's on a Sunday. He would bring home the text; repeat the divisions of the discourse; dine at twelve; and regale, upon a gaudy day, with buns and beer at Islington or Mile-end. But now the modern city lads are of a dif-

ferent metal. They have their gaming clubs in the Garden, their little lodgings, the snug depositories of their rusty swords and occasional bag-wigs, their horses for the turf, aye and their commissions of bankruptcy, too, when they are not yet well out of their time. Often do such doings shock the ears of Mr. Richard, in his weekly travels from Cateaton-street to his boarded box at Clapham; and he has only to look in the direction of his elder brother's home to see the changes going forward there. The Wealthys have now a baronetcy in the family; and nephew George, too fine for an apprentice forsooth, must have the education of a gentleman. He must run the gauntlet through a public school, where, at sixteen, he practises more vices than he would otherwise have heard of at sixty. Then he must be removed, in the course of nature, to the university, where, lest his morals should accidentally be mended and his understanding improved, he is fairly set free altogether from the restraint of the one and the drudgery of the other by the privileged distinction of a silk gown and a velvet cap. He is then, after a few more years, by the indulgence of a fond father not blind to the benefits of travelling, enabled to enter the society of London endowed with all proper gifts and graces. By the Germans he has been well grounded in gaming and gluttony, France has furnished him with fawning and flattery, Italy has equipped him with caprioles and cantatas; and thus accomplished, my young gentleman is returned, with a cargo of cooks, flunkeys, barbers, and fiddlesticks, to plunder the honest by non-payment of his tradesmen, and to enrich the knave by discharging his debts of honour. "'Sdeath!" cries Mr. Wealthy, "that a rascal who has "picked your pockets shall have his plunder punctually paid, "while the industrious mechanic who ministers to your "very wants shall have his demand treated as insolent!"

It was natural, that, after this comedy of the *Minor*, Foote should take higher rank as a writer, as well as a position of greater influence with the public; and out of this, Murphy did his best to draw some profit in the

following year, by inducing him to become joint-manager with himself for a summer season at Drury-lane, where one of the principal incidents was his production of the *Liar*.

This clever little piece, though less original than the bulk of his writings, was better known down to a later time than most of them, by the partiality of actors (while yet the stage existed) to the part of young Wilding. Corneille's *Menteur* had already suggested Steele's *Lying Lover*, and but for these Foote would hardly have handled the subject. As usual, however, he contributed to it his own freshness and originality; and in the course of it there is a sketch of a Monthly Reviewer, which we please ourselves by thinking must have given a hearty laugh to Goldsmith. It is even possible indeed that the quarrel with Griffiths and his wife, of which Foote could not fail to have heard at Tom Davies's shop, may have suggested the sketch of which it falls within our plan to subjoin a brief outline. The Monthly Reviewer, when he first makes his appearance in the little comedy, is in the position of a footman. His reviewing had brought him so low that they wanted him to turn player; but whatever might happen to him, he was determined not to bring a disgrace upon his family, and so he resolved to turn footman. But before he was a reviewer, his condition of life had been greatly superior, seeing that he once sustained the dignity of sub-preceptor to one of those cheap rural academies with which the county of York is so plentifully stocked. (So early had the foul Dotheboys system planted itself, which, in its full growth and most abominable luxuriance, the genius of Dickens, among other delights and services bestowed upon this generation, uprooted and swept away.) Recommended to the compiler of the Monthly Review, the whole region of the *belles lettres* falls at once under the dignified sub-preceptor of Dotheboys. The excepted subjects are physics, divinity, and mathematics, all which the compiler's wife was entrusted with. But within his own range he is quite as despotic as the old lady herself, and like another Aristarch, deals out fame and damnation

at pleasure. Condemning books he never reads, and applauding the fidelity of translations of the originals of which he understands not a syllable, all he has at any time to consider are the caprices and commands of his master and his mistress. His method is very concise. He copies the title-page of a new book, never in the first instance going any further; and then, if ordered to praise it, he has at hand some ten words or so, as "laudable "design," "happy arrangement," "spirited language," "nervous sentiment," "elevation of thought," "conclusive "argument," which, scattered through as many periods, effectually do the business: whereas if he is to decry, he has, equally ready and serviceable, "unconnected," "flat," "false," "illiberal stricture," "reprehensible," "unnatural," with which having peppered the author, he soon rids his hands of the work. It is a method which renders all subjects equal to him. Plays or sermons, poetry or politics, music or midwifery, it is the same thing. Nevertheless he is under the necessity of adding that "notwithstanding "what we say, people will judge for themselves." The melancholy result is that his work hangs upon his hands, and all he can at last manage to get from his liberal employer, and the learned old lady, is four shillings a-week and his small beer.

The other noticeable incident of the joint-management at Drury-lane, besides the production of the *Liar*, was that of Foote having consented, by way of a civil service to some of his fashionable friends, to play for a fine and very fastidious gentleman, son of the great Bentley, a comedy called the *Wishes*, only noticeable now for the vast fuss that was made about it. There was a sort of private rehearsal of it at Bubb Dodington's grand villa on the Thames, which Foote superintended, and where the Parnassus was composed of Bubb himself, the two Chief Justices, the author, his nephew Richard Cumberland, and Lord Bute; on which occasion, apparently not a little to Foote's amazement, the author produced a most prodigious prologue, wherein the flattery of the young king and his

favourite so egregiously transcended all safe bounds, that not even the favourite's presence prevented Foote's quiet remark, "This is too strong." Horace Walpole, a great friend of Bentley's, describes the scene. "The prologue "concludes with young Augustus, and how much he "excels the ancient one by the choice of his friend. Foote "refused to act this prologue, and said it was too strong. "*Indeed,* said Augustus's friend, *I think it is.*"

Another description of what passed we have from Richard Cumberland, who, after a laughable detail of Bubb's lace, fatness, grandeur, and absurdity, says he saw Foote's wicked wit indulging itself at expense of his entertainers all the evening, as he afterwards indulged the public in his comedy of the *Patron.* And as, in this excellent comedy, he had indeed turned to admirable use the experience thus acquired of what he called the ignorance of pretenders to learning, and the parade and vanity of their affected protectors, it will most properly be described here. He thought it the best comedy he had written up to the time of its production, and undoubtedly it belongs, with the *Minor,* to the higher order of his writings. Like that piece, too, it was dedicated to the Lord Chamberlain of the day, then the Earl Gower; whom Foote as pointedly thanks as he did his predecessor, for kindness rendered without any of those attendant mortifications too often experienced by much greater writers than himself from much less men than his lordship, and whom he therefore as truly rejoices to see at the head of the most popular domain in the republic of letters, "a spot that has always "been distinguished with affection and cultivated with "care by every ruler the least attentive to either "chastening the morals, polishing the manners, or, "what is of equal importance, rationally amusing the "leisure of the people."

The leading notion of the *Patron,* that to patronise bad poets is to the full as pernicious as to neglect good ones, is happily expressed in its hero, Sir Thomas Lofty. Also the hero of fifty dedications, he is yet a tedious,

insipid, insufferable coxcomb; and, without genius, judgment, or generosity, has been set up for his wealth alone, by underling bards he feeds, and broken booksellers he bribes, as a sharp-judging Adriel, the muse's friend, himself a muse. Eagerly he swallows their fulsome praise, while he affects not to claim it for himself but for that hidden genius he is ever labouring to discover in a dull unfavourable age. In such a dearth of invention, give him leave, gentlemen, to introduce to them a little smart satirical epigram; new, as he says, and prettily pointed; a production that he thinks even Martial himself would not have blushed to acknowledge. His own? O, fie! No; sent him this morning anonymously. It is wretched rubbish, but is pronounced fine! fine! very fine! by Sir Thomas's friends; it has such an ease and simplicity, a turn so unexpected and quick, a satire so poignant; to all which Sir Thomas replies, Yes, he thinks it possesses, in an eminent degree, the three great epigrammatical requisites, brevity, familiarity, and severity. And is he not, really now, himself the author? Ah, cry the flatterers, name! name! To which Lofty loftily replies, the name is needless. So it is an acquisition to the republic of letters, any gentleman may claim the merit that will. The hint is not lost on the chorus, who protest thereupon that Sir Thomas is the great manufacturer, and other poets but pedlars that live by retailing his wares. The idea finds favour in his eyes. Why, he says, to pursue the metaphor, if Sir Thomas Lofty *were* to call in his poetical debts, he certainly believes there might be a good many bankrupts in the Muse's Gazette. Not that Sir Thomas is poet only. Science, as he is told, and he really thinks it the most classical thing he ever heard, "science first saw the day with Socrates in the Attic "porch; her early years were spent with Tully in the "Tusculan shade; but her ripe, maturer hours, she "enjoys with Sir Thomas Lofty near Cavendish-square." So struck is he with that compliment, indeed, that as he happens to have written a play (*a chef-d'œuvre*) which is

to be performed this very evening, he privately selects, out of his faithful chorus, this particularly enthusiastic young friend to father upon him the entire credit of it, with all its chances of success or damnation. The subject will surprise you, he observes to his victim. It is the story of Robinson Crusoe. Are you not struck? The whole fable is finely conducted, and the character of Friday, *qualis ab incepto*, nobly supported throughout.

As the young gentleman's the play is accordingly produced, and, chiefly by the help of the unwitting chorus, damned; whereupon Sir Thomas, with more than the unruffled temper and equability of a Sir Fretful, encourages his friend under the disaster which he affects to consider wholly his. The public are blockheads; a tasteless, stupid, ignorant tribe; a man of genius deserves to be damned who writes anything for them: but courage, dear Dick! the principals will give you what the people refuse; the closet, the critics, the real judges, will do you that justice the stage has denied. Print your play—"*My* play! "Zounds, Sir, 'tis your own!" "Speak lower, dear Dick; "be moderate, my good, dear lad!"

All the details of this comedy are equally rich and effective. In the entire acting drama we do not know a succession of more telling points, for a true actor, than the three scenes that deal with the failure of the play: the first, in which Sir Thomas receives, act by act, the account of its cold reception and gradual damnation, from his footman, his coachman, and his tailor, whom he had stationed in the theatre to witness it; the second, in which the troop of egregious flatterers who had so fulsomely praised his trashy epigram, as extravagantly to his face abuse his luckless comedy, in the same hope of currying favour with him; and the third, in which his agony of fear under the threat of exposure compels him at last to purchase silence from Dick by the bribe of his niece's hand. Compared with these, even Sheridan's Sir Fretful is weak; and Foote himself not only acted the part every night, but also a characteristic little sketch of

an irascible West Indian, Sir Peter Pepperpot, which he had brought in for the mere sake of an individual portraiture it enabled him to give.

A sketch of a very different kind he had also introduced, for a laugh at the Society of Antiquaries. It was playing many fantastic tricks at the time, having recently obtained its charter; and preparatory to a grander laugh at it, which he soon after indulged in his *Nabob*, he made a distinguished member of the body one of Miss Lofty's lovers, much to the amazement of all who knew him. For though Martin Rust may pretend to be in love with Juliet Lofty, they are sure she's too modern for him by a couple of centuries. He likes no heads but upon coins. Married! the mummy! why 'tis not a fortnight ago since he was seen making love to the figure without a nose in Somerset-gardens; he was caught stroking the marble plaits of her gown, and asked if he was not ashamed to take such liberties with ladies in public. The inconstant old scoundrel! But you know how it happened? Juliet met him last week at her uncle's: he was a little pleased with the Greek of her profile, on closer inquiry he found the turn-up of her nose to exactly resemble the bust of the Princess Poppæa, and his business was done in an instant. In favour of the tip of that nose he has offered carte blanche for the rest of the figure, and is resolved to add Juliet's charms to the catalogue of his capital and curious collection. On the other hand, the young lady wonders at his impudence in thinking to marry a goddess, and makes strenuous resistance thereto; but having her father's consent he declines to give her up, until it happily becomes necessary to give up either her or a burnt bit of newspaper, the precious remains of the very Number Forty-five of the *North Briton* that was burnt at the Royal Exchange, the edges soiled by the link, but many of the letters exceedingly legible. He straightway resigns Juliet without a moment's hesitation. As inimitably as Foote had written, Weston played this part, and made it a gem of comic acting as precious as the rarest and rustiest of the old antiquary's coins.

Nor without some allusion to the underling bards and broken booksellers spawned from such patronage as Lofty's, should we close our account of this comedy, so justly a favourite with Foote himself. Mr. Dactyl and Mr. Puff are another and even lower chapter of the Vamps and Harry Handys. Puff was a fellow, according to Mr. Dactyl's account, that to him owed every shilling; whose shop was a shed in Moorfields, whose kitchen was a broken pipkin of charcoal, whose bedchamber was under the counter, and whose stock in trade was two odd volumes of Swift, the Life of Moll Flanders with cuts, the Five Senses printed and coloured by Overton, a few Classics thumbed and blotted by the boys of the Charterhouse, and the Trial of Dr. Sacheverel: until Mr. Dactyl set him afloat with his Elizabeth Canning and his quack medicines, his powders for flatulent crudities, his lotions, potions, and paste, all of which he invented. On the other hand, according to Mr. Puff, when he first knew Dactyl, the rascal was a mere garretteer in Wine-office-court (where, by the way, Goldsmith at this moment lived), furnishing paragraphs to the *Farthing Post* at twelvepence a dozen; from which Mr. Puff promoted him to be collector of casualties to the *Whitehall* and *St. James's*, which he soon lost by his laziness, for he never brought them a robbery till the highwayman was going to be hanged, a birth till the christening was over, or a death till the hatchment was up. In spite whereof Mr. Puff had continued to give the fellow odd jobs at translations, which got him boiled beef and carrots at mornings, and cold pudding and porter at night: only, for this winter forsooth, Dactyl had got a little in flesh by being puff to a playhouse. But the hungry days of vacation will soon be back, and he'll be fawning and cringing again like a lean dog in a butcher's shop before the counter of his publisher, begging a bit of translation that Mr. Puff won't buy: no, not if he could have it for twopence a sheet.

The extraordinary frequency with which Foote introduces matter of this kind into his comedies, leaves us at

least not doubtful of the view he took in regard to the relations of literature and publishing in his day; and we may add that the distinction he is careful to mark, in authorship, between the hack and the gentleman, he more rarely recognises in the bookselling branch of the trade. Only a couple of summers before the *Patron* was acted he had introduced into his *Orators*, from which the threat of an oak-stick was alone thought to have saved Johnson, a publisher and printer of much consideration and dignity; an alderman in Ireland, and, though with but one leg, a pompous person everywhere; who had corresponded with Swift, who still corresponded with Lord Chesterfield, who was understood to have given advice privately to sundry Lords-Lieutenant, and who had a *Journal* of his own through which he continued to give advice publicly to Lords and Commoners in both kingdoms; whose numerous foibles had mightily amused Foote in all his visits to Dublin, and who on a recent visit to London had himself shown them off in such flourishing exuberance, that the temptation to put him in a farce was no longer resistible. Yet opinions differ still as to George Faulkner, and one cannot quite make out whether or not his self-satisfied and sleek exterior covered anything that fairly provoked and justified satire. Cooke says that his peculiarities were but trifling, and his manners unoffending; on the other hand, Cumberland says that so extravagant were they, and such his solemn intrepidity of egotism and daring contempt of absurdity, that they fairly outfaced even Foote's imitation, and set caricature at defiance. This also is borne out by what Isaac Reed remarks of his ludicrous affectation of wit and fine society, and of his perpetual boastings, in the teeth of every disadvantage of age, person, address, and deficient leg, of lavish favours from the fair sex. Nor can there be a doubt, we think, especially since Lord Mahon's publication of suppressed passages in the letters, that what in Lord Chesterfield had been taken for an honest admiration of his sense, was after all but a humorous liking for his

absurdity. He makes him his pleasant butt, and is always laughing in his face, for the enjoyment of his grave and unmisgiving reception of it.

But granting so much, the mere corporal infirmity should have restrained the mimickry of Foote, who now bodily transferred to the Haymarket, wooden leg and all, Alderman George Faulkner by the title of Mr. Peter Paragraph. That he had thus selected for derision a man with such a defect, the satirist too soon had cause to lament; but for the rest, we fear we must even say with Mr. Smirk that it is pleasant if wrong, and certainly we cannot wonder that Foote's Peter, a caricature of a caricature, should largely have attracted crowds to laugh at him. He comes on talking of his *Journal*, and how the exact day of his departure from Dublin had been recorded in it; and how he had been last week to visit a peer, for he knows peers and peers know him. Quoth his Lordship, "Mr. Paragraph, with respect to your journal, I would wish "that your paper was whiter or your ink blacker." Quoth Mr. Paragraph to the peer, by way of reply, "I hope you "will own there is enough for the money;" whereat his Lordship was pleased to laugh, it was such a pretty repartee. Then you may hear him confessing to those amorous glances exchanged with the daughter of Mr. Vamp of the Turnstile, even before his first wife died; and describing how after the death of that estimable woman, of whom he wrote a prodigious good character in his *Journal*, the old scoundrel brought the courtship with Miss Vamp to a standstill by playing him a slippery trick. You see, as Vamp could give no money in hand, Mr. Paragraph had agreed to take the girl's fortune in copies: he was to have the Wit's Vade Mecum entire, four hundred of News from the Invisible World in sheets, and all that remained of Glanvil upon Witches, Hill's Bees, and Bardana on Brewing, together with three-eighths of Robinson Crusoe, and so much Balsam of Honey, a new quack medicine which Vamp found very profitable. They were also to go halves in the Cock-lane Ghost. But here the hitch occurred. While

Mr. Paragraph, and two authors whom he had hired to ask questions of the ghost at nine shillings a night, were taking notes of the rappings and scratchings at the house of Mr. Parsons himself, positively that old rascal Vamp had privately printed off a thousand eighteenpenny scratchings, entirely unauthorised revelations of the spirit, purchased of two Methodist preachers at the public house over the way!

All this of course was an avowed jest, and as such harmless enough; but the sting lay in Foote's amazing imitation of Faulkner's pompous manner and ways, and in the connection of such absurd pretensions, and alleged amorous propensities, with such ridiculous incidents borrowed from the lowest class of the bookselling fraternity to which the Alderman belonged, as their worthless publications, their copyright bargainings, and their money-making by means of quack medicines. The piece in which he was made to figure, as the reader perceives, had for one of its designs that of ridiculing the spirit-rappings of the Cock-lane Ghost. It was meant also to laugh at the prevailing passion for oratory; at the lectures whereby old Sheridan was then professing to teach it to the million; and at the Robin Hood Society in which the million, presided over by a baker, and including "lawyers' " clerks, petty tradesmen, and low mechanics,"[1] practised it for themselves. Foote himself took the chair at the debates so introduced upon the stage, and used to convulse the audience by his references to his honourable friend in the flannel nightcap, to the honourable gentleman in the straps, and to the worthy member with the pewter pot at his mouth. Among the actors of the Haymarket company there was a sort of skeleton of a man for thinness, and him he had always, on these occasions, dressed in a coat that might have taken in the capacious Daniel Lambert, the arms being enormously wide and the cuffs covering his hands. A roar always burst forth when Foote recurred (no matter how often) to this personage as " the much respected gentleman in the sleeves ".

[1] The *Connoisseur* of 28th March 1754 so describes the Robin Hood.

Hardly had the *Orators* thus exhibited Mr. Paragraph, however, when Lord Chesterfield hastened to tell George Faulkner that Mr. Foote, who he believed had been one of George's symposium in London, was "taking him off" in his new farce, and hadn't he better bring an action against him? For, says his Lordship, with the humour he always passed off upon Faulkner for gravity, though *scribere est agere* was looked upon as too hard in the case of Algernon Sydney, yet my Lord Coke in his incomparable Notes upon Littleton, my Lord Chief Justice Hales in his Pleas of the Crown, my Lord Vaughan, Salkeld, and in short all the greatest men of the law, do, with their usual perspicuity and precision, lay it down for law, that *agere est agere;* and this being exactly Mr. Foote's case, he, my Lord Chesterfield, shall hold himself in readiness to receive any orders in the affair, for retaining counsel, filing a bill of Faulkner *versus* Foote, or bringing a common action upon the case. Nothing can be greater fun than the letter, all through; and the mischievous old wit must have been amazed indeed when his advice was taken seriously, when the case of Faulkner *v.* Foote did actually appear in the Dublin law-courts, and when Faulkner absolutely triumphed in a verdict, though he got but nominal damages. However, he got himself compared to the Greek philosopher whom the Greek wit ridiculed, which was a feather in his cap; and he made a great deal of money, first to last, by printing and selling large numbers not only of the original libel but of the counsels' speeches at the trial; and he received congratulations from Lord Chesterfield for a victory which the divine Socrates had not influence enough to obtain at Athens over Aristophanes, nor the Great Pompey at Rome over the actor who had the insolence to abuse him. Though, to be sure, the post of the very next day took a letter from the same sarcastic old peer to the Bishop of Waterford, only the other day published, rejoicing at George having made his enemy his footstool, but professing amazement that their philosophical friend should not have

practised a noble contempt, instead of being so irascible as to go to law!

"Fear of Foote" had suppressed this passage when the letters to the Bishop were published. It was a feeling prevalent through society, and not even temporarily abated by Faulkner's unexpected legal success. Opportunity and leisure for reflection, doubtless for unavoidable reproach, were soon perforce to visit Foote; but certainly his position was never so strong, or his influence so much dreaded, as after the verdict of the Dublin jury against him. A couple of months later he put jury, counsel, judge and all into a comic scene, and played it at the Haymarket; and in the same summer he gibbeted the Duke of Newcastle, ex-premier of England (of whom it was he who said the admirable thing that the Duke appeared always as if he had lost an hour in the morning and was looking for it all day long), by the side of Justice Lamb, fish-salesman and ex-militia-major of Acton, in Matthew Mug and Major Sturgeon of the glorious *Mayor of Garrett.*

Who has not enjoyed this farce more than half the comedies he has seen? Who has not been glad to accompany the gallant and indefatigable Major in his marchings and counter-marchings, from Brentford to Ealing, from Ealing to Acton, from Acton to Uxbridge; dust flying, sun scorching, men sweating? Who has not sympathised with that undaunted heroism, which, though he entered late upon the profession of arms, after his first campaign in Bunhill-fields no more minded the noise of the guns than a flea-bite? Who has not mourned over his lamented comrade Molassus, who fell on the field of Hounslow at sight of a Smithfield drove of oxen, a victim to his zeal in not pulling off his spurs before he went into action? And, after another but not inferior fashion, how many are the friends whom Jerry Sneak has propitiated; who have felt for, even while they laughed at, that chilled and frightened little henpecked mortal, so yearning at home for a bit of the brown, so anxious everywhere to be snug

and comfortable if he durst, so eager to tell you of the roaring rare boys he meets at the Nag's-head, always smiling as if he would be friends with you upon any terms, and the tears coming in his eyes because you will not let him. And has not the too affable Matthew Mug had his own way, too, ever since that summer-night at the Haymarket, getting everybody's face between his hands as he talks to them of the most trivial matters, palavering and humbugging whomever he comes near? While, in Peter Primer the schoolmaster, have we not cheerfully recognised what Mr. Heel-Tap found in him, the man for our money, the man of learning, the man that can lay down the law and is wise enough to puzzle the parson, the man that means to make the entire common folk statesmen in time, and, as to the great people, swears as how the miscarriages are all owing to their not learning to read, and if they will but once submit to be learned by him there's no knowing to what a pitch the nation might rise? For is not this the very man we honoured ourselves by making chancellor four-and-twenty years ago; by whose help the nation has indeed risen since, in proportion as it has submitted itself to be taught by him; who, in the great work of informing the people and reforming the laws, labours still as if nothing were done while anything remains to do; and, in the evening of a life not less visibly occupied with useful public service than in its morning, can find leisure still to enjoy the wit and entertainment of the *Mayor of Garrett?* All praise to his good taste, for surely it is the best farce in the world. Even dull Mr. William Whitehead, who on reading it could see nothing but a "simple vulgar thing" (as became a poet whom Foote was never tired of making his butt for laughter), is obliged to admit, in writing to his noble friends at Nuneham, that the house was full, that there was a great deal of laughing, and that he laughed loudly with the rest.[1]

[1] MS letter to Lord Nuneham, 2 August 1763, communicated to me by Mr. Cunningham.

Nor was the *Commissary*, with which he followed up this success, unworthy of it. Here his aim was to ridicule the successful commissaries and army contractors of the Seven Years' War, who are exhibited accordingly in their splendid houses, with every requisite for making them gentlemen except the fact of their being by nature something else, bent upon undergoing all fashionable exercises, but finding oratory, dancing, fencing, and riding the great horse, wofully difficult, and groaning over the pains and penalties of having to be gentlemen. In all this he had availed himself freely of Molière: but apart from it were two characters entirely of his own invention, in one of which he indulged an extravagant laugh at Dr. Arne, whose eccentricities of person and manner made him easy game; and in the other exhibited a professional match-maker and purveyor of foreign manufactures home-made, a female dealer in the contraband whether of marriages or merchandise, who cheated the customers whom it was her business to help to cheat others, and who remains a presentment of the vices and follies of that day too lively to be omitted from the figures we have here sought to sketch and reproduce out of the pages of its satirist and censor.

Let us introduce the reader, then, to Mrs. Mechlin. Her agents must have genius and parts, for it is doubtful if in the whole bills of mortality there is so general and extensive a dealer. She has plenty of customers, and for kinds of commodities the most various. Nobody in the liberty of Westminster lives in more credit. The very best of quality are not ashamed to visit her. She is respected by her neighbours, punctual in her payments, keeps regular hours, and is never absent from the Sunday sermon. Nor is she at all given to lying, except, like other tradesfolk, in the way of her business. She is the commodious, convenient Mrs. Mechlin, at the sign of the Star in the parish of St. Paul's. An enemy may say that she carries about a greater cargo of contraband goods, under her petticoats, than a Calais cutter; that she trades against the virtues of her sex; that she cants, cozens,

lends money, takes pawns, and makes up matches not very creditable. Let the enemy say what he will. Mrs. Mechlin only works too much, and earns but victuals and clothes: more cost than worship, as she herself declares. Small honest worship she gets, certainly; and she has a hard time of it to please people. The gentleman who has the offer of the Gloucestershire living prefers, forsooth, to live a little longer on the fine keen air of his Cumberland curacy, before he will marry the party who is offered as the condition of his being inducted. Yet he has but a rusty cassock, and the living is a good fat one, with a fine woman for wife into the bargain, and he has moreover been told that a friend of the lady's will take the child off his hands.[1] Truly he is squeamish; but his wry faces are not worth heeding while there is a merchant's clerk in the city, a comely young man, happy to become the bridegroom for no greater matter than a small place in the Custom-house, and the promise of the purchase-money of the presentation. People might twit Mrs. Mechlin, perhaps, about the rich old dowager of Devonshire-square; and she will not deny that it certainly was an awkward accident that she should, not meaning it, have introduced her own son to the dowager as a young man willing to wed her forty thousand in the four per cents and her two houses at Hackney: such accidents, however, will happen. But as for Mrs. Loveit, she was rightly served. Why didn't they add a clause to the act to prevent the old from marrying clandestinely as well as the young? As to the profits of her trade, Mrs. Mechlin does not deny that they are great, but she has to contend with a vast deal of rivalry from women of fashion, who are constantly setting up for themselves in her particular line; and she has to undergo many other risks and troubles. There is Mr. Paduasoy, who manufactures for her, in Spitalfields, foreign smuggled silks; would you believe that the man's wife was

[1] The reader may perhaps remember that the macaroni parson, Dr. Dodd, afterwards so deservedly hanged, had married "for a consideration" a mistress of Lord Sandwich's.

allowed to get hold of certain pieces, wherein some vulgar Deputys' wives positively flaunted it at the Mansion-house before Mrs. Mechlin had time to display them! The result was, of course, that another of his gown pieces could not be smuggled for the whole six months following. So the Spitalfields loom was to throw off, meanwhile, some India handkerchiefs and light spring waistcoats from Italy, but not another Genoa velvet could be put in hand. Perhaps even a fresh advertisement of the kind of goods had become necessary, in which case Mr. Paduasoy must write an anonymous letter to the Custom-house and send a new batch of old silks to be seized. A bonfire on the premises would make a fine paragraph in the papers, and thoroughly inform the public once more where smuggled goods could be had.—Such were the resources, and such the character, of Foote's Mrs. Mechlin, general agent; of whose business some branches yet survive, we suspect, though the good lady herself has been so long dead.

That her life was not a stage life merely, but that she actually did exist in that day, on a more real stage than the Haymarket, we have but to open Walpole's letters to prove. There is one where he relates to Lady Ossory one of Charles Fox's ventures in match-making, in which we surely catch veritable sight of her. Can it be other than Mrs. Mechlin who has promised Charles a West Indian fortune of 150,000*l*; and who puts off his eager expectation from time to time, on the ground now that the heiress is not landed, now that she has the small-pox, and now that she cannot abide a black man? The proposition could surely have originated only with Mrs. Mechlin, that Charles, before he sees her, should powder his bushy black eyebrows. The only doubt that arises to us is when we are told that the matchmaker, to confirm her promise, advances at last even part of the fortune; but Walpole explains this: "Some say," he continues, "an hundred "and sixty, others three hundred pounds. But how was "this to answer to the matron? Why, by Mr. Fox's "chariot being seen at her door. Her other dupes could

"not doubt of her interest, when the hopes of Britain "frequented her house." A more striking testimony to the reality of Foote's satire could hardly have been given, for in truth this actual matchmaker of Walpole's, so far from being the person we have just been supposing, did not make her public entrance on the scene till nearly nine years after Mrs. Mechlin's debut at the Haymarket, when she appeared as one of those very ladies of fashion of whom Mrs. Mechlin had made bitter complaint as already then beginning to interfere with the profits of her business. Mrs. Grieve's scandal dates at the close of 1773,[1] whereas the *Commissary* had been acted in the summer of 1765.

Foote now stood at the highest point of his worldly fortune. It seemed impossible that in the career he had chosen there could open to him anything beyond the successes achieved. Never had such splendid seasons rewarded him at the Haymarket as those in which the *Patron*, the *Mayor of Garrett*, and the *Commissary*, were produced, and never did his personal position appear more enviable. In Paris, the preceding year, he had been not the least prominent figure in the group of celebrated Englishmen who thronged there at the declaration of peace; on his return, his popularity with various classes of his countrymen could hardly be exceeded; and in the company of men of high rank and superior fortune, says the elder Colman, he preserved always an easy and noble independence. He had now enlarged both his town and his country house, he drove as good horses as any in the Mall, his dinners and wines were famous, and he had lately spent fifteen hundred pounds on a service of plate, which he justified by remark-

[1] Walpole's letter to Lady Ossory is dated the 18th November 1773 (vol. vi. 10-13, Ed. Cunningham); and in subsequent letters he describes the lampoons and verses to which the incident had given rise. There appears to be no reasonable ground for doubt that something of the sort had occurred; for though Lord Holland professed not to believe the story, he cannot be said to express a conviction on the subject. He adds that Foote introduced it, with some variations, in one of his pieces. This we shall find to be the case. It was in the *Cozeners*, the drama produced immediately after the scandal obtained sufficient currency to have become game for the satirist.

ing, truly enough, that the money was more likely to continue with him in that form than in one he could more conveniently melt down. Perhaps no man's celebrity took so familiar as well as wide a range. The very boys at Eton had him down to show him about the college, and their Captain asked him by way of reward to repeat to them the best of his sayings.[1] It is to his credit to add that he always remembered literature as his calling, and that its place should be first in his regard. One night of the run of the *Minor*, when peers had been sent away from the over-crowded theatre, he put himself to grave inconvenience that he might get Gray and Mason into a side-box. When a flippant fine lady of his theatre complained of the humdrum man Doctor Goldsmith was in the green-room, compared with the figure he made in his poetry, he explained to her, with most delicate wit, that the reason of it was that the Muses were better companions than the Players. Yet at the same time, at his dinners, Cooke tells us, where his guests of rank and fashion were sure always to find themselves among writers and actors, he never busied himself less for the comfort of a poor player than for the entertainment of a royal highness. Gilly Williams describes at this very time the return of the King's brother from the continent. "The Duke of "York, on his arrival, went first to his mother, then to "his Majesty, and directly from them to Mr. Foote."

Better for Mr. Foote, however, that he had not gone to him; for together they afterwards went on a visit to Lord Mexborough's, and here, in hunting, he rode a too spirited horse, was thrown, and received so severe a hurt that his left leg had to be amputated. The story

[1] Mr. Selwyn mentioned that Foote, having received much attention from the Eton boys in showing him about the College, collected them round him in the quadrangle, and said, "Now, young gentlemen, what can "I do for you to show you how much "I am obliged to you?" "Tell us, "Mr. Foote," said the leader, "the "best thing you ever said." "Why," says Foote, "I once saw a little "blackguard imp of a chimney-"sweeper mounted on a noble steed, "prancing and curvetting in all the "pride and magnificence of nature,— "There, said I," goes Warburton on "Shakespeare."—*Diary of a Lover of Literature*, by Thomas Green.

went that he had his jest nevertheless, even under the knife of the surgeon; but his letters to Garrick tell a different tale. He feels in all its bitterness the calamity that has fallen upon him, the blow which has struck him in that height of his prosperity. It is several weeks after the accident, yet he is still at Cannon-park, and, notwithstanding some flattery of appearances, is looking upon his hold in life as depending on a very slender tenure.[1] Yet he can rejoice to hear of his friend's success in the *Clandestine Marriage*, which Lady Stanhope had told him of the night before; and one can see that his heart is touched with a gratitude to Garrick which he finds it difficult to give adequate expression to. He falls to praising his wife, and says from what he has seen, and all he has heard, Garrick will have more to regret when either of them dies than any man in the kingdom. And then, poor fellow, he fears he has explained himself imperfectly. "I do "not know whether the expression be clear in the last "period but one, but I mean your separation, whichever "occasions it—but in truth," he adds, "I am very weak, "in pain, and can procure no sleep but by the aid of "opiates. Oh! it is incredible all that I have suffered." Yet he hopes he may still be spared to express in person some part of his thankfulness to dear Mr. Garrick for all his attention and goodness.

While these letters thus display the real kindness of heart that existed between these celebrated men, old Lord Chesterfield was telling Faulkner with eager satis-

[1] These passages are worth appending: "Nothing can be more generous "and obliging, nor, I am sure, at "the same time would be more bene- "ficial to me, than your offers of "assistance for my hovel in the "Haymarket; but the stage to me "at present is a very distant object, "for, notwithstanding all the flat- "tery of appearances, I look upon "my hold in life to depend on a very "slender tenure; and besides, ad- "mitting the best that can happen, "Is a mutilated man, a miserable "instance of the weakness and frailty "of human nature, a proper object "to excite those emotions which can "only be produced from vacant "minds, discharged of every melan- "choly or pensive taint? I am "greatly obliged to Mr. Colman for "his friendly feelings on my late "melancholy accident. I am no "stranger to his philanthropy, nor to "how easily he has adopted one of "the finest sentiments in his favourite "author. *Homo sum, et humani ni- "hil à me alienum puto.*"

faction that Heaven had avenged his cause by punishing his adversary in the part offending. The same thought had of course occurred to the satirist himself. "Now I "shall take off old Faulkner indeed to the life!" was the first remark he made when what he had to suffer was announced to him.

Such compensation for the suffering as the Duke of York's influence with his brother could obtain, awaited him when he left his sick-room. The King had granted exclusively to him for life, at the Duke's instance, a royal patent for performances at the Haymarket from the 14th of May to the 14th of September in every year. It enabled him to do what he had long desired. He almost entirely rebuilt the theatre, erected a handsome new front to it, and opened it, a year and a half after his accident, in May 1767, with a *Prelude* of infinite humour and wit, and with a cheerfulness to all seeming undiminished. He played during the season, too, several of his favourite parts; as well as that capital tragedy for warm weather which reached him anonymously from Dodsley's shop (and remains to this day anonymous), with the title of *The Tailors*. Yet it took no very piercing glance to discover the change the man had undergone.[1] With all his high comic humour, says an actor who watched him nightly, one could not help pitying him as he stood upon his one leg, leaning against the wall, while his servant was putting on his false stage-leg, with shoe and stocking, and fastening it to the stump:—*he looked very sorrowful*:—but, instantly resuming all his fun and mirth, he hobbled forward, entered the scene, and gave the audience what they expected, their plenty of laugh and delight.

And without intermission he supplied this, replenished yearly from his own stores of invention, until 1776.

[1] This appears even in the letter which he at once wrote off to Tate Wilkinson on receiving the *Tailors*, full of expectation as to the hit it would make. He had not been well, he says. He had injured himself by acting two nights successively to strengthen Barry's engagement at his theatre. But he is better, and signs himself as much his friend's as ever "except the trifle of a leg."

There are few such examples on record. Nine original dramas, of which eight were three-act comedies, formed the produce of his literary labour in the same number of years; interrupted as these were by visits to Dublin and Edinburgh, and occupied as they always were with the anxieties of management, with the toil of acting almost every other night, and with many intervals of sickness and pain, of which they bear no trace. In character they are to the full as admirable as any we have described, in wit as lively, as hasty in the management of plot, but as prompt and pointed in their keen and rapid satire; and they have all the perfection of unsuperfluous dialogue, the natural minutiæ of expression, the quick clear talk of real life, in which we hold Foote's writings to be incomparable. Among them were the *Deril on Two Sticks*, the *Lame Lover*, the *Maid of Bath*, the *Nabob*, the *Bankrupt*, the *Cozeners*, and the *Capuchin*.

Not the least masterly or successful was that with which he resumed his pen, the *Devil on Two Sticks;* in which the satire, too, was unusually genial. It was fair game to laugh as he did, and as Molière had already done, at the disputes and mal-practices of doctors;[1] to make

[1] Let us endeavour to give some notion, very briefly, of the general conclusions of Foote's satire as to this matter of the practice of physic in his day, which in so many forms and special cases he satirised. According to him, you will find it, in some of its professors, a science, noble, salutary, and liberal; but in too many others a trade as mean as it is mercenary, practised by a contemptible combination of dunces, nurses, and apothecaries. The spirit of discord prevails. The republic of tied periwigs, like the Romans of old, had turned their arms from the rest of mankind to draw their short swords on themselves. To carry on the metaphor, his characters exhibit to us, in this great town, two corps of such troops armed with deadly weapons, equally numerous and equally formidable. The first are disciplined and fight under a general whom they christen a president. The second contains the hussars and pandours of physic, and rarely attack a patient together —not but that, single handed, they can do good execution. But the contention with each other is perpetual, and the main cause is pride. The light irregular troops are jealous of some honours which the others possess by prescription, and though but a militia they think they have a right to equal rank with the regulars. And so the strife goes on. Foote's dramatic picture, in short, is altogether in the manner of Molière, and Dr. Last's examination before the College of Physicians, with all its comic exaggeration, is a paraphrase of the last scene of the *Malade Imaginaire*. Of course it is needless to add, in this latter respect, and with reference to all chances of malpractice, how

fun of even the good Doctor Brocklesby's eagerness for high-seasoned political news; and to hit at Mrs. Macauley through her disciple Mrs. Margaret Maxwell, who threatens to niche her brother into the great republican history of the day, wherein she promises him, though perhaps too late for the historical text, that he shall be soundly swinged in the marginal notes.[1] His last comedy before his illness, as we have seen, was the *Commissary*, also partly borrowed from Molière, but in which he had indulged a bitterness of quite unwarrantable personal ridicule against Doctor Arne which makes the contrast of the *Devil on Two Sticks* more striking. One hears with no surprise that every one took it good-humouredly; —that Mrs. Macauley, going to see it represented and figuring herself a Socrates in this particular, sat side by side with Horace Walpole, when, after unsuccessful attempts to get places for himself, he was fain to be content with admittance to his niece Cholmondeley's box;— and that from another full-length figure in the piece, Sir William Browne of the College of Physicians, Foote, who had hit him off to his identical wig and coat, his angular figure, and his glass stiffly applied to his eye, received pleasant intimation that his portrait was inexact in only one particular, and as he had omitted the Pre-

great have been modern changes, and how much thereby such chances are lessened; but it is not very pleasing to have to add that the disputes in the profession, and the apparent difficulty of bringing them to any point of satisfactory agreement, remain to the present day pretty much as they were in the days of Foote.

[1] The reader of Horace Walpole's letters need not be reminded that Mrs. Macauley was a notable figure in her day; that she got a thousand pounds a volume for her history; that she had a finely furnished house in Berners-street with servants in laced liveries, where she received and treated cleverly and elegantly, with the air of a princess; and that (such was her vogue with some classes of admirers) the incumbent of Wallbrook set up a statue to her, while she yet lived, in the chancel of his church. Horace himself is glad to have Gray's opinion, from Mann, to corroborate his own, that Mrs Macauley's is the most sensible, unaffected, and best history of England "that we have had yet." I may add that one of the pamphlets she published had the unhappily chosen title of "Loose Thoughts" prefixed to the subject of which it treated, and this being made matter of objection in Foote's presence, he drily remarked that he did not himself see any objection to it, for that the sooner Mrs. Macauley got rid of such thoughts the better.

sident's muff he begged to forward his own. Of the rest of the satire we shall perhaps intimate enough if we mention little Apozem the apothecary, who so admires a slow fever, especially if it be nervous, and with a lovely dejection of spirits. It was he who was following a funeral once into St. George's (a "sweet pretty burying, "velvet pall, hatbands and gloves"), when who should be standing in the porch but Kit Cabbage the tailor, with a new pair of breeches under his arm. "Servant, Master "Apozem," says he, "what, you are carrying home your "work too, I see?" Zoffany, who had already painted a fine Major Sturgeon, produced one of his masterpieces in a scene of this play. Foote bequeathed it to Mr. Fitzherbert, and it is now in the collection of Lord Carlisle.

The *Lame Lover* followed, and was not inferior in wit, in success, or in the propriety of its satire. He had nowhere played off so grand a battery against the law.[1] Serjeant Circuit's initiation of Son Jack in the mysteries of legal iniquity could only have proceeded from a master in the art, and the arguments in Hobson and Nobson are immortal.[2] Here, too, as in the *Knights* he had laughed

[1] Foote's jokes against attorneys would fill a volume, but space may be spared for the grave communication he made to a simple country farmer who had just buried a rich relation, an attorney, and who was complaining to him of the very great expenses of a country funeral, in respect to carriages, hatbands, scarves, &c. "Why, "do you bury your attorneys here!" asked Foote. "Yes, to be sure we "do: how else?"—"Oh! we never "do that in London." "No!" said the other, much surprised, "how "do you manage?"—"Why, when "the patient happens to die, we lay "him out in a room over night by "himself, lock the door, throw open "the sash, and in the morning he is "entirely off."—"Indeed!" said the other with amazement, "what be-"comes of him?" "Why, that we "cannot exactly tell; all we know "is, there's a *strong smell of "brimstone in the room the next "morning*."

[2] No case in the books has better claim than this to survive, and carry down to other generations its record of absurdities practised in our Law Courts that might otherwise have exceeded human belief. We must enrich our note with the leading arguments. The object of litigation was a small parcel of land, which was to decide the fate of a borough; and to bring matters to a short issue, it was agreed that Nobson should, on the premises, cut down a tree, and Hobson bring his action of damages. Before going into Court it had also been agreed that to be regular, and provide for fresh causes, no notice was to be taken of the borough and lands, the real objects in view, but both sides were to stick fast to the tree, which was of no

at fine ladies running away with footmen (which Lady Harriot Wentworth had just done), he ridiculed footmen and maids aping fine ladies and gentlemen. Serjeant Circuit's servants get up a private play, like the quality, which they

importance at all. And so the plaintiff's counsel began. "Gentlemen of "the jury,—I am in this cause "counsel for Hobson, the plaintiff. "The action is brought against "Nebuchadonezer Nobson, that he "the said Nobson did cut down a "tree, value two-pence, and to his "own use said tree did convert. "Nobson justifies, and claims tree "as his tree. We will, gentlemen, "first state the probable evidence, "and then come to the positive. And "first as to the probable. When was "this tree here belonging to Hobson, "and claimed by Nobson, cut down? "Was it cut down publicly in the "day, in the face of the sun, men, "women, and children, all the world "looking on? No; it was cut down "privately, in the night, in a dark "night, nobody *did* see, nobody "*could* see. Hum. And then with "respect and regard to this tree, I "am instructed to say, gentlemen, "it was a beautiful, an ornamental "tree to the spot where it grew. "Now, can it be thought, that any "man would come for to go in the "middle of the night, nobody seeing, "nobody *did* see, nobody *could* see, "and cut down a tree, which tree "was an ornamental tree, if tree had "been his tree? Certainly not. And "again, gentlemen, we moreover "insist, that this tree was not only "ornamental to the spot where it "grew, but it was a useful tree to "the owner: it was a plum-tree, "and not only a plum-tree, but I am "authorized to say the best of plum-"trees, it was a damsin plum. Now, "can it be thought, that any man "would come for to go, in the middle "of the night, nobody seeing, nobody "*did* see, nobody *could* see, and cut "down a tree; which tree was not "only an ornamental tree, but a use-"ful tree; and not only a useful "tree, but a plum-tree; and not only "a plum-tree, but the best of plum-"trees, a damsin plum? Most "assuredly not. If so be, then, that "this be so, and so it most certainly "is, I apprehend no doubt will re-"main with the court, but my client "a verdict will have, with full costs "of suit, in such a manner and so "forth, as may nevertheless appear "notwithstanding." To which, with not inferior eloquence, pertinence, and plainness, the counsel for Nobson replies. "Gentlemen of the Jury,—I "am in this cause counsel for Nob-"son, for Nebuchadonezer Nobson. "I shan't, gentlemen, upon this "occasion, attempt to move your "passions, by flowing periods, and "rhetorical flowers, as Mr. Serjeant "has done. No, gentlemen, if I get "at your hearts, I will make my way "through your heads, however thick "they may be—in order to which, I "will pursue the learned gentleman "through what he calls his probable "proofs. And first as to this tree's "being cut down in the night. In "part we will grant him that point, "but, under favour, not a dark "night, Mr. Serjeant; no, quite the "reverse, we can prove that the "moon shone bright, with uncom-"mon lustre that night. So that, if "so be, as how people did not see, "that was none of our faults, they "might have looked on and seen, if "they would. And then, as to this "beautiful tree, with which Mr. "Serjeant has ornamented his spot. "No, gentlemen, no such matter at "all; I am instructed to say quite "the reverse; a stunted tree, a "blighted blasted tree; a tree not "only limbless, and leafless, but very "near lifeless; that was the true "state of the tree. And then as to

call the Distrustful Mother; and in another form the same subject is continued in the *Bankrupt*, where Sir James Biddulph's man finds riddles too low a species of writing for him, but confesses he has now and then some dealings with Noble (the then publisher of fashionable novels, whose fixed price was ten pounds for a story in a couple of volumes), and has in hand a genteel comedy of one act which is thought to have a good deal of merit, but the managers have really become such scribblers themselves that they won't give genius fair play. But the hero of the *Lame Lover*, Sir Luke Limp himself, was its great strength. Here he laughed at Prince Boothby, so called for his love of rank, whose mother, believed to have been Fielding's Sophia Western, was one of his own greatest admirers; and it was here also he put what cheerful face he could on his misfortune, and represented his own stump as he had represented Faulkner's.

We must give the reader, however, a nearer glimpse of Sir Luke. As he enters the scene he fires off such an artillery of jokes on his own infirmity, that the audience, put thoroughly at their ease with his one leg, can but laugh their assent when, pronouncing two to be a sheer redundancy, he asks if they don't think he'd refuse to change with Bill Spindle for one of his drumsticks, or chop with Lord Lumber for both of his logs. That he has carved out a good morning's work for his single limb is certain. He has positively a thousand things to do for half a million of people. He has promised to procure a husband for Lady Cicely Sulky, and to match a coach-horse for Brigadier Whip. After that, he has to run into the city to borrow

"its use, we own it was a plum-tree, "indeed, but not of the kind Mr. "Serjeant sets forth, a damsin plum; "our proofs say loudly a bull plum; "but if so be and it had been a "damsin plum, will any man go for "to say, that a damsin plum is the "best kind of plum? not a whit. I "take upon me to say, it is not a "noun substantive plum. With plenty "of sugar it does pretty well, indeed, "in a tart; but to eat it by itself, "will Mr. Serjeant go to compare it "with the queen-mother, the padri-"gons—" At which critical point in the proceedings the eloquent counsel, who have meanwhile been subjected to sundry dramatic interruptions, are swept off fairly into the plot of the comedy.

a thousand for young At-all at Almack's; he has to send a Cheshire cheese, by the stage, to Sir Timothy Tankard in Suffolk; and he has to get at the Heralds'-office a coat of arms to clap on the coach of Billy Bengal, a nabob newly arrived. That is the way with Sir Luke. He is one of those eternally busy men who can busy themselves with everything but their own affairs. But now a servant enters and delivers him a card. Sir Luke reads. "Sir "Gregory Goose desires the hônour of Sir Luke Limp's "company to dine. An answer is desired." Gadso! a little unlucky. He has been engaged this three weeks to Alderman Turtle. But then some one remarks that Sir Gregory is just returned for the corporation of Fleesum. Is he so? Oh, oh! That alters the case. He sends his compliments to Sir Gregory, and will certainly go and dine there; and he sends his regrets to the Alderman in Threadneedle-street, sorry can't wait upon him, but confined to bed two days with new influenza. Soon after, another servant interrupts Sir Luke with another letter. It is an invitation from the Earl of Brentford. "Taste for music "—Monsieur Duport—fail—dinner upon table at 5." Irresistible this; and accordingly messenger is sent scampering after Sir Gregory's servant to tell him, quite in despair, an engagement recollected that can't in nature be missed. Not that he prefers a lord to a knight. No, there you are mistaken. Oh no; hang it, no: it is not for the title; but to tell you the truth, Brentford has more wit than any man in the world, and it is that makes Sir Luke so fond of his house. At this moment, however, in comes a servant abruptly, running against Sir Luke as he is leaving the stage, and bringing news that a Duke is waiting at the door—his Grace himself, in his own coach—and would be glad of Sir Luke's company to go into the City and take a dinner at Dolly's. What! his own coach with the coronets? There is no possibility of withstanding that. Joe must run at once to Sir Gregory Goose's; no, he is already gone to Alderman Turtle's; well, then, let this man step to the knight's—hey!—no—he must go to my lord's—

hold, hold, no—Sir Luke has it! Step first to Sir Greg's —then pop in at Lord Brentford's, just as the company are going to dinner—say anything—that Sir Luke's uncle from Epsom—no, that won't do, for he knows nobody cares a farthing for him—hey!—"Why tell him," cries Sir Luke, "hold, I have it—tell him, that as I was going "into my chair to obey his commands, I was arrested by "a couple of bailiffs, forced into a hackney coach, and "carried to the Pied Bull in the Borough. I beg ten "thousand pardons for making his Grace wait, but his "Grace knows my misfor——." You hear the sentence indistinctly finished at the street door, for Sir Luke has stumped off, in all haste and without leavetaking, towards the carriage with the coronets. The character was, and we regret to say continues in some abundance to be, fair game for satire; and Foote entered into it with singular relish, and played it inimitably. His own withers were unwrung. He had himself at least nothing of the flunkey among his faults or vices. He had formerly ridiculed dedications to the great by selecting his bookseller for one of the earliest of such offerings; because, apart from good paper and good print, he protested he owed no obligations in connection with his writings to any one in the country, and meant to take good care not to stand in need of patronage. Nor did he at any time afterwards indulge in dedication, except as the frank and manly acknowledgment of kindness done.

Less allowable than the satire of the *Lame Lover* was that of the *Maid of Bath* in ridicule of the miser Long (Miss Tylney's Mr. Long), and his alleged conduct to Miss Linley. For though Mr. Moore's account of the affair is upon the face of it ridiculous, and it is understood that the reparation made was greatly induced by Foote's exposure, which Garrick would surely not have countenanced by a prologue if he had not known it to have been in no small degree provoked, the subject was of too private a nature for this kind of public handling, and the piece illustrates nothing now so forcibly as the grave

mistake its writer too often made in giving such direction to his wit. Nevertheless its local portraiture of Bath, with its residents and visitors, its punch-drinkers, port-drinkers, and claret-clubs, its ancient rakes and sharking dowagers, is as good as the scenes of St. Ronan's Well; and pleasant if wrong is its old, fusty, shabby, shuffling, money-loving, water-drinking, mirth-marring, amorous old hunks of a hero, Solomon Flint, who brings down to marry him (this was a hit at Horne Tooke) a parson who is a prodigious patriot, and a great politician to boot, but whose greater merit to Mr. Flint is that he has left behind him at Paris a choice collection of curious rich clothes which he had promised to sell him a penn'orth. Richard Cumberland and Garrick together visited Foote on the eve of the production of this comedy, walked with him in his garden, heard him read some of its roughly-sketched scenes, enjoyed a good dinner with him, to which he had pressed them to stay, and were treated to superlative wine. Foote lived at the time at Parson's Green, where Theodore Hook afterwards lived; but the country-house he was most partial to, and occupied for the greater part of his life, was at North End.

After the *Maid of Bath* came the *Nabob*, and who needs to describe its hero after Mr. Macaulay's description of him, dissolute, ungenerous, tyrannical, ashamed of the humble friends of his youth, hating the aristocracy yet childishly eager to be numbered among them, squandering his wealth on panders and flatterers, tricking out his chairmen with the most costly hot-house flowers, and astounding the ignorant with jargon about rupees, lacs, and jaghires? Nor did this masterly and powerful satire strike more heavily at the baseness which corrupts than at the meanness which is ready to be corrupted. It is Mr. Touchit, a model politician of the borough of Bribe'm, who, when Mr. Mayor complains against the new candidate that where a Nabob settles he raises the prices of provisions for thirty miles round, says he talks like a fool; for, suppose they *have* mounted beef and mutton a trifle, ain't we obliged to

them for raising the value of boroughs too, and you should always set one against the other. It was he also who organised the Christian Club of bribery in his town on the principle of a religious equality of division in the profits, so that no man should have a larger share than another; for would you believe it, when he took up his freedom he could get but thirty guineas for a new pair of jack boots, while Tom Ramskin over the way had a fifty pound note for a pair of wash-leather breeches. And it is to Mr. Touchit we owe the terse description of the Christian Club rule of conduct, that, though it may have some fear of the gallows, it don't value damnation of a farthing. This excellent gentleman and his friends have waited on the Nabob with a tender of the nomination of their two members at the ensuing election. One they could not have afforded him under three thousand at least, but as his honour had a mind to deal in the gross, they should charge him but five for both. The bargain is settled, and the Christians are departing, when they catch sight of a "gentleman in black," in fact a negro, and taking him for a native Indian, and thinking the Nabob might wish to confer some dignity on a gentleman whose tribe had conferred those splendid titles upon his honour in India, they venture to suggest that perhaps his honour might choose to make one of the family member for the corporation of Bribe'm. "Why," says the Nabob in amazement, "you would not submit to accept of a negro?" Truly that makes no difference to them. Their present members for aught they know, may be of the same complexion, for they had never yet set eyes on them; and the Christian Club has ever been persuaded that a good candidate, like a good horse, can't be of a bad colour.

It seems a little startling that such passages as these should have passed under the eye of the licenser; but the office was then held by Lord Hertford, who in all matters of difficulty was wont to have recourse to Horace Walpole; and that Horace had stomach for a great deal more than even this, no reader of his Letters need be told.

Since the present Essay first appeared, an unpublished letter of Lord Hertford's to Walpole has been sent to the writer from which it would seem that his advice was taken in reference to this very Comedy, and that its first draft at least must have been completed in the autumn of 1770. Several allusions in the *Lame Lover* (produced in its original state in the May of that year) show that the characters and doings of the Indian magnates were then a subject in Foote's mind, and to the only piece acted between the *Lame Lover* and the *Nabob* (the *Maid of Bath*) the expressions in Lord Hertford's note would be wholly inapplicable. "Dear Horry," he writes in August 1770, "Be so good to cast your eye over the piece "enclosed herewith which Mr. Foote has sent to me, and "acquaint me if you do not think with me that the "political part of it is too strong, and that the piece "should be returned to him to be softened and altered "before it can be licensed. I remain, dear Horry, ever "truly yours, HERTFORD." Another inference from this letter it is difficult to resist. The onslaught upon the Society of Antiquaries, at the Nabob's introduction as a member, was not in the original sketch, and we hope it is not uncharitable to suppose that Horace may have suggested it. One of their great pundits, Dean Milles, had mortally offended him by remarks on the Historic Doubts, and he was longing for a reasonable excuse to withdraw his name from the list of members, when the general roar excited against them by the *Nabob* supplied him with the very excuse he wanted. The Short Notes of his life inform us: "Foote having brought the Society of "Antiquaries on the stage for sitting in council, as they "had done, on Whittington and his Cat, I was not sorry "to find them so ridiculous, or to mark their being "so, and upon that nonsense, and the laughter that "accompanied it, I struck my name out of their book. "That was at the end of July." (1772). "I have taken "leave of them," he wrote to Mann in the same month, "having so good an occasion presented as their council on

" Whittington and his Cat, and the ridicule that Foote has " thrown upon them."

Never had greater crowds gathered nightly to the Haymarket than during the run of the *Nabob*, and among the crowds so attracted, and so deservedly, were nabobs themselves not a few. Indeed a pleasant story is told of two East Indians of high rank and influence calling in Suffolk-street to chastise the author of the satire, and staying there to dine and make merry with him. " Each " cries that's not levelled at me!" It is certain that two persons were supposed to be chiefly aimed at, Sir Matthew White and General Smith, the latter being, like Foote's Sir Matthew Mite, the son of a cheesemonger; and the Suffolk-street story appears to be confirmed by a curious passage in a letter of George Garrick's to his brother written after the comedy was played, in which he mentions it as an extraordinary fact that Foote was going to dine with General Smith at Sir Matthew White's, and likewise to lie all night there, and this by strong invitation. " Foote " is afraid," he adds, " that they will put him in the coal-" hole."

The assault upon sentimental comedy in his celebrated *Puppet-show*,[1] produced on Monday the 15th of February 1773, succeeded the *Nabob;* but the piece written for the puppets, *Piety in Pattens*, of which you were to learn by

[1] At first not very successful. "It "gave me great pleasure," Fitzmaurice hastened eagerly to write to Garrick "to hear the sort of success "Mr. Foote met with last night. "What impudence to advertize "again!" But Foote knew better than a man of rank or fashion the audience with whom he had to deal, and he so wittily improvised additions to the Puppet-show that it became the ultimate attraction of that season. The truth was that in the first instance expectation had been raised too high. Such was the reputation of Foote at this time that the announcement of a novelty in which himself and puppets were to be the only actors drove the town out of its wits with expectation. It attracted such a crowd on the evening of its production that the street was impassable for more than an hour, and the huge assemblage, in its impatience, broke open the doors of the theatre, great numbers getting into the house without paying anything. Hats, swords, cloaks, and shoes, were lost; several ladies fainted; and a girl had her arm broken in an endeavour to get into the pit. Then, as the natural consequence of such overstrained expectation, there was a reaction, and, as we have seen, the first night suffered by it.

the moral how maidens of low degree might become rich from the *mere* effects of morality and virtue, and by the literature how thoughts the most common-place might be concealed under cover of words the most highflown, was never printed. It gave the finishing blow to the good work which Goldsmith had so effectively begun; but all that remains of it is a lively exordium spoken by Foote himself, lavish of learning, wit, and pleasantry,[1] and in which, among other things, there is a laugh at Garrick for his Stratford Jubilee. For this affair unhappily had brought a coolness again between the friends. Garrick's stewards, and wands, and mulberry medallions, and white-topped gloves, and fireworks that would not go off, and rain and dirt-draggled masquerading, and above all William Whitehead's silly lines to him—

> "A nation's taste depends on you,
> Perhaps a nation's virtue too"—

so utterly overthrew the wit's patience, that he proposed to have a pasteboard imitation,[2] and to cap the couplet

[1] I cannot resist the temptation of transcribing one passage which exhibits not only the wit and pleasantry, but the unvarying freedom of Foote's comment on the politics and public men of his time. "As I have the "honour" he said, "during the "summer months, of appearing be-"fore you decorated with the royal "livery, my present employment "may to some seem ill-suited to "the dignity of that situation. Yet, "though I am no friend to mono-"polies, I could wish that there was "no other puppet-show in this town "but my own, and that no nobler "hands were employed in moving "wires and strings than what are "concealed by that curtain. There "are puppets, though formed of flesh "and blood, full as passive, full as "obedient as mine; but that mine "may not have the disgrace of being "confounded with those of that com-"position, permit me to desire that "you will profit by the error of a raw "country girl. Being brought by "her friends for the first time to a "puppet-show, she was so struck with "the spirit and truth of the imi-"tation, that it was scarce possible "to convince her but all the puppets "were players. Being carried, the "succeeding night, to one of the "theatres, it became equally difficult "to satisfy her but that all the "players were puppets."

[2] "Pray, Sir, are your puppets to "be as large as life?" asked a lady of fashion. "Oh dear, Madam, no," replied Foote; "not much above the "size of Garrick." Horace Walpole describes to one of his correspondents the interference of Lord Stafford mentioned in the text. "Garrick," he says, "by the negotiation of a "Secretary of State, has made peace "with Foote, and by the secret article "of the treaty is to be left out of the "Puppet-show."

with "Cock-a-doodle-do!" But the Marquis of Stafford interposed, and unexpectedly at his door the two managers met. It was the genial dinner-hour, and as they alighted from their chariots significant looks were exchanged. Garrick broke the silence. "What is it, war or peace?" "Oh, peace by all means!" said Foote, with frank good will. And he kept his word.

The laugh which was left in the Puppet-show exordium was good-natured, and even Garrick could not object to his friend's whimsical and exquisite imitation of him in the act of refusing to engage in his company Mr. Punch's wife, Joan. The interchange of hospitalities between Hampton and North-End was resumed, and each became again the other's affectionate servant. We find Garrick after this using his great influence on Foote's behalf with newspaper editors and proprietors. A dinner is proposed by Foote, at which the guests are to be common friends; and to the invitation Garrick pleasantly responds, that, whether himself inclined to North-End or not, a small attention to his honour would have to take him, as Mrs. Garrick was resolved, in case of any prudery on his part, to go alone. Nor does Foote's gallantry fail him in return. We have before us an unpublished letter[1] in which he describes a compliment he had ventured to pay

[1] Another of this date, which has not yet seen the light, is sufficiently brief and characteristic to be appended here:—"You and I are a couple of "buckets; whilst you are raising "the reputation of Shakespeare, I "am endeavouring to sink it, and for "this purpose I shall give next Mon-"day the tragedy of *Hamlet*, the "Prince by &c, but even in this situ-"ation we shall want your assistance "to pull our poet above ground—the "Ghost's armour, which if you will "give your housekeeper orders to "deliver, you will be extremely kind "to your affectionate servant, S. "Foote."—A third, also unpublished, shows Garrick advancing money to meet an unexpected demand made upon Foote by Mr. Sowdon, a partner with him in some theatrical undertakings and properties. Foote, who is thanked in the same correspondence for some little place in the Haymarket Theatre conferred on an applicant at Garrick's request, replies among other things: "I am, my dear Sir, extremely "obliged to you for your letter. I "can readily account for Sowdon's "silence; he wanted I suppose to "leave the door open for a re-union, "but that can never happen. It is "not impossible but (from his calling "for payment just at this time) that "he may accompany Barry in his "expedition to Ireland. I think "Shuter's cant word for cash is "corks; it has not only metaphori-"cally but literally been a useful "jacket to Sowdon, on which he has

Mrs. Garrick in a new piece, and as the compliment is not now to be found in his published writings, the reader may not object to see it here. The superiority of female government is asserted from the flourishing state of Spain, France and England, governed at the same period by the Princess des Ursins, Madame de Maintenon, and the Duchess of Marlborough; when, an objection being made from the success of Drury-lane theatre under the acknowledged direction of a man, to weaken that plea the director is said to have also the good fortune to be assisted in his councils by a Madame de Maintenon. Whereupon Garrick's delight reveals itself by a message of cordial congratulation on the success of the *Bankrupt*, which he has heard, from a gentleman who loves and understands alike the stage and the law, is Foote's best performance.

Among the best it certainly is for its high and legitimate aim. That was the fatal year (1772) of the vast mercantile failures which Horace Walpole tells us were all owing to the Scotch bankers, which involved losses computed beyond four millions, and spread everywhere ruin and dismay. Suggested by such personal incidents, there

"often navigated with great success "in the Irish seas. I have wrote to "Sowdon, desiring him to fix a place "and a day in the next week to receive "his money. . . Woodward has taken "a last night for himself, and offered "the public a regale that would dis- "grace even Bartholomew Fair, cet "homme là est bien charlatan. One "of my boxkeepers died about six "weeks since; the recommendation "of an honest man for the office is a "favour done me." I have also other letters before me which show the good understanding which continued to subsist between them after this date. Garrick hopes soon to see him at Hampton with "the family of our "friends at Greenwich." Garrick takes part with him against Hiffernan, whom Foote had turned out of his theatre for vomiting treason before the whole company in consequence of a supposed slight shown him behind the scenes by the Duke of Cumberland; and who revenged himself by recommending the public to go and pull down the Haymarket, if the management persisted in refusing to admit half-price. I find also that they together wrote candidates' addresses for the Election at Garrett, and went together to see the fun. I close this note with one more extract from an unpublished letter showing the hospitalities of North-End. "I am "happy that your inclination and "health hold for Monday. I am "sorry that Mrs. Garrick should "think any preparation necessary for "bringing any person she thinks fit, "where I have the least power. I "have asked Fitzherbert and Major "Mills to meet you, so you know "your company: I beg pardon, "Chetwynd, who is much yours, "will be here."

was yet no mere personal bitterness in it. Indeed he struck out of it many allusions that might have given pain to Sir George Fordyce, whose failure from unwise speculation in this same year, though it spread wonder and dismay over London, left his character unimpeached; and he levelled it exclusively at knavish manufacturers of bankruptcies on 'Change, and at not less wicked inventors of calumnies in the low and prurient press. A distinction between their personalities, and his own, was here eagerly sought to be marked; for when the satirical editor claims to supply the law's defect by stigmatising offenders it cannot reach, his claim is called a malicious pretext under which to assail the innocent, and he is told that when slander is sown broadcast the deformity of vice is overgrown, and the result is to make bad men worse by hardening them in evil, and to render even the good indifferent to what is the source of patriotism and the sustainment of virtue, a just public opinion. However, Mr. Margin would rather be persecuted than preached at. Persecution, he says, is the life and soul of his trade, and his definition of hard times is a time with no prospect in it of getting lodged in Newgate for a libel. It was strange that Foote should not see that personal satire of any kind carried with it, in a greater or less degree, the vice he thus denounced in Mr. Margin; that no one can ever flatter himself he is extirpating knavery, by merely exposing a notorious knave; and that the only true course is to strike at the offence, and to leave the offender to be struck at by justice.

It was after the production of this comedy Foote went to Ireland for the last time. In the preceding year he had bid Scotland farewell. Such journies involved fatigue and endurance in those days, and, though he is now little more than fifty years old, we may see that age is stealing on him. In that journey to Edinburgh,[1] he wrote to Tate

[1] It was said of him on the occasion of this visit that he gave entertainments unusually extravagant as a rebuke to Scotch parsimony, and used to send his cook to market in a sedan-chair. An anecdote of the visit, which we have from Boswell, ought not to be omitted. Foote was at a

Wilkinson, he had encountered more perils than in a voyage to the Indies; for, not to mention mountains, precipices, savage cataracts, and more savage men, he had been locked up for near a week in a village, dirty, dismal, and desolate, by a fall of snow. But he turned with pleasanter thoughts to Ireland. Friends were there who had always welcome for him; the place was associated with his earliest success; and never had warmer greeting been given him than on his visit soon after his accident, the first after Faulkner's verdict. Lord Townshend was then Lord-lieutenant, and the Bedford and Rigby hospitalities were redoubled. His plays were commanded more than once, and the result of the engagement was to reimburse a great loss he had undergone at play in passing through Bath to Holyhead, and to restore him to the Haymarket a richer man than he left it. Lord Harcourt was now Lord-lieutenant, and he knew the same kindness awaited him.

Yet there was a touch of sadness in the occasional prologue he had written for his opening night, when he appeared in the *Nabob*. He reminds the Irish that they first had acknowledged his humour as an actor ("you gave, " at least discovered first, the vein"); and, contrasting his youthful outset five-and-twenty years back with what he

large dinner-party, where Boswell also was present, and the conversation turned upon Johnson. The wit instantly made merry at Johnson's expense. And it was very coarse jocularity, says Boswell, and made the company laugh so much that he felt it was not quite civil to himself. So, as a Roland for Foote's Oliver, he tells them that he at least had lately heard a capital thing from Johnson, whatever other people's experience of him had been. "Ah! my old friend "Sam," says Foote, "no man says "better things; do let us have it." "Why, he said," rejoins Boswell, "when I asked him if you were not "an infidel, that if you were, you "were an infidel as a dog is an in-"fidel; that is to say, you had never "thought upon the subject." There was a loud laugh at this coarseness, which of course Foote did not relish; and Boswell declares, with much self-admiration for the disagreeable thing he had been delivered of, he never saw Foote so disconcerted, grave, and angry. "What, Sir!" said he, "talk thus of a man of liberal edu-"cation—a man who for years was "at the University of Oxford—a man "who has added sixteen new cha-"racters to the drama of his coun-"try!" And he proceeded earnestly to resent the gross imputation.

was then to present to them, he can find but this subject for self-congratulation in it, that—

> "If age contracts my muscles, shrills my tone,
> No man will claim *those* foibles as his own."

But with his brother actors, before and behind the scene, all was with him as of old. O'Keefe was a hanger about the Dublin theatre in those days, and more than half a century afterwards recalled with a kindly and vivid impression the celebrated wit, with his humorous twinkle of the eye, his smile so irresistible with one corner of his mouth, and his voice rather harsh except when imitating others. People wondered at him in Dublin, according to O'Keefe, for the dinners and wine he gave, and for what seemed something of a parade of affluence; but this made part of the man. He never saw him, he adds, that he was not surrounded by laughers, for none that came near him could help it; and nothing struck him so much as the effect produced upon him one night, when, sitting in the green-room as usual amid a crowded circle of the performers, all in full laugh at and with him, he was suddenly disconcerted by observing one young actor, who had fixed himself right before the centre of attraction, maintain steadily a calm, grave, quiet face, unmoved by the roar around. It was an actor whom O'Keefe had that very morning seen drilled by Foote in one of his comedies, when he mispronounced a word. "Ha, ha!" cried Foote: "What's "that, sarco*phag*us? the word is sarc*o*phagus; it's derived "from the Greek, you know; I wonder that did not strike "you!" But the youth had some wit, it would seem, if he had little Greek, and he punished Foote in the manner just related.

It was not, however, simply as a jester he had such vogue with his brother performers. They are a kindly, genial race, and Foote was always generous to them. In this respect, certainly, he took the lead of the Drury-lane manager; as well as in the simple, business-like, unpretending way, in which he always treated of matters of busi-

ness. An actress complained to him one day of the low salary she had from Garrick, on which Foote asked her why she had gone to him, knowing the salary she might have had at the Haymarket. "Oh, I don't know how it "was," she said; "he talked me over so by telling me he "would make me immortal, that I did not know how to "refuse him." "Did he so indeed?" said Foote. "Well, "then I suppose I must outbid him that way. Come to "me, then, when you are free. I'll give you two pounds "a week more, and charge you nothing for immortality!" Of the common vice of the profession, he seems to have had less than almost any actor on record, for it was assuredly not jealousy of Garrick that made him laugh at the attempt to set Powell above him, and, this case excepted, he was remarkable for his encouragement of debutants. Shuter, Weston,[1] Tate Wilkinson, Castallo, Baddely, Edwin, all these men he brought forward himself, made known, and assisted in every way; and it was not alone actors of merit, but the *hoi polloi* of the scene, who experienced his goodwill. Old actors were now with him at the Haymarket, who had been with him since he first went there; whom he had kept till they had long outlived their work; and whose presence on the salary-list he still justified to his economical friend Jewel, by the remark that "he kept "them on purpose to show the superior gentlemanly

[1] Weston was Foote's favourite among all these men, and by all accounts he must have been an incomparable actor. "You should "have seen Weston," said Northcote to Hazlitt. "It was impossible, "from looking at him, for any one to "say that he was acting. You would "suppose they had gone out and "found the actual character they "wanted, and brought him upon the "stage without his knowing it. Even "when they interrupted him with "peals of laughter and applause, he "looked about him as if he was not "at all conscious of having anything "to do with it, and then went on as "before. In Scrub, Dr. Last, and "other parts of that kind, he was "perfection itself. Garrick would "never attempt Abel Drugger after "him. There was something peculiar "in his face; for I knew an old "school-fellow of his who told me he "used to produce the same effect "when a boy, and when the master "asked what was the matter, his "companions would make answer—"'Weston looked *at me*, Sir!' Yet "he came out in tragedy, as indeed "they all did!"—*Conversations of Northcote*, 210-211.

"manners of the old school."[1] During this very winter in Dublin he was taken so ill one day at rehearsal that he was obliged to announce upon the stage his inability to play. "Ah, Sir," said a poor actor who overheard him, "if you will not play, we shall have no Christmas dinner." "Ha!" said he at once: "If my playing gives you a Christ-"mas dinner, play I will!" and, O'Keefe adds, ill as he was he kept his word.

Not many days later his life was endangered by an accident which has not till now been publicly described. He relates it himself in a letter to Garrick, dated on the last day of December 1773, which has not before been printed, and which leaves as vivid and characteristic an impression of Foote as perhaps any single letter has ever been able to convey of any writer. It requires little explanation. Jewel is his treasurer and secretary, and always faithful friend. The allusion to Macklin is to his recent authorship of plays. Little Jephson, whom he here so happily mimics on the page, is the same who afterwards wrote plays that Horace Walpole protested were superior to Beaumont and Fletcher, and would live for all ages. Faulkner needs no description from us, but the reader will compare what he is made to say so sleekly with what we have formerly said of him. Little Dot is the elder Colman. Nor is the allusion to Johnson's and Goldsmith's Club (the Literary Club, as it is so often still misnamed) the least curious point of this various and interesting letter. The Club had been in existence ten years, yet Foote, a man to whom the best society of his time was accessible, has only now first heard of it!

"My dear Sir, Had it not been for the coolness and resolution of my old friend, and your great admirer, Jewel, your

[1] On other occasions, however, he would illustrate these easy and superior gentlemanly manners by telling of an eminent actor "of the old "school" who, being informed that he must play *Richard the Third* the following night, returned for answer to the manager, "that his rheuma-"tism was so bad he could scarcely "stir hand or foot and could not "possibly play Richard, but if they "would get up the *Careless Husband* "he was quite ready to play Sir "Charles Easy."

humble servant would last night have been reduced to ashes by reading in bed, that cursed custom! The candles set fire to the curtains, and the bed was instantly set in a blaze. He rushed in, hauled me out of the room, tore down and trampled the paper and curtains, and so extinguished the flames. The bed was burnt, and poor Jewel's hands most miserably scorched. So you see, my dear Sir, no man can foresee the great ends for which he was born. Macklin, though a blockhead in his manhood and youth, turns out a wit and a writer on the brink of the grave; and Foote, never very remarkable for his personal graces, in the decline of his life was very near becoming a toast.

"I never saw the *Monitor* you allude to. It is a paper stigmatised here for its virulence. However, it has had no apparent effect upon the public, as it would have been impossible for them to have paid more attention to the nights I have played.

"Little Jephson, who owes his establishment on this side the water to me, is (by being smuggled into Parliament) become in his own idea a man of importance. He has been delivered, in a senate frequent and full, of a false conception or two; and is unanimously declared by his colleagues incapable of either facundity or fecundity.

"The first time I met with my gentleman was about a month after my landing, at the Parliament-house. He had fixed himself on the lowest bench next the floor, his arms folded and legs across, the right eye covered by his hat, and the left occasionally thrown on me with an unmarking transitory glance. However, the very polite attention paid to me by the Speaker, the Duke of Leinster, Mr. Conolly, and indeed all the men of consequence there, roused the Captain's recollection. He approached with a cold compliment, and dropped a scarce audible apology for not having called at my door; but public-a-a-affairs had-a-so entirely engrossed him, that he had really no leisure to-a-a-a. I own I was ready to laugh in his face; but recollecting a gravity equal to his own, I applauded his zeal for the commonwealth. Begged that no consideration of me should for the future divert his thoughts one moment from the cause of his country. Was afraid I had already taken up too much of his time. Made him a most profound bow. And the Copper Captain in politics with great gravity retired to his seat. I find he has been left by Lord Townshend as a kind of incumbrance upon his successors; but I have some reason to believe that they would be glad to get rid of the mortgage. He has since the interview been very frequent and free with my knocker, but the servants have received proper instructions.

"I have often met here a Mr. Vesey, who tells me that he belongs to a Club with you and some other gentlemen of eminent talents. I could not conceive upon what motive *he* had procured admittance; but I find he is the Accomptant-General here, so I suppose you have him to cast up the reckoning.

"I have not seen Alderman Fawkener. I thought myself obliged to take some little notice of him in an occasional prologue. The following is an original letter of his:

"TO — TICKELL, ESQ.

"My most dear and esteemed Friend,—Your concurring in opinion with me the last day we spent so agreeably together, that it would be prudent in me forthwith to call in my *debits*, hath induced me to advertize you that I have commissioned our common friend, Mr. Thomas Croaker, attorney-at-law, to sue you to an outlawry for one hundred pounds, as per bond, with all possible speed. The steady and firm friendship we have ever maintained, and the great esteem and respect I entertain for the valuable memory of your very worthy deceased and ingenious father, Mr. Secretary Tickell, compels me to send you this notice, being, my dearest friend,

"Your most faithful, affectionate, and obedient

"Humble servant till death,

"GEORGE FAWKENER."

"I sincerely rejoice in your success, and feel no compassion for Macklin, Kenrick, Covent-garden, nor that little *Dot*, its dirty director. At this season the winds are so variable, that I may possibly see you before you can acquaint me with this reaching your hands. You may assure Mrs. Garrick that flattering is not one of my failings, and that she has the merit of making me constant and uniform in perhaps the only part of my life—my esteem and veneration for her. Adieu, my dear Sir. A good night, and God bless you. Take care of the candle.

"SAMUEL FOOTE."

He soon followed his letter; but before he bids adieu to Ireland one fact should be mentioned to his credit, since it shows him, professed satirist as he was, by no means ready to satirise at other people's bidding, or upon appearances merely. There was a great fop in Dublin at that time, Mr. Coote, afterwards Lord Belmont, really a man of sense, though nobody who saw him in his silk coat, satin shoes with red heels, or feathered hat, was prepared to give him credit for it. Not so Foote, however. The wit was asked on a special occasion purposely to make a butt of him, but he soon discovered him for what he

really was, and refrained. "I think this same Mr. Coote," was his remark to the disappointed and amazed friends who afterwards remarked on his forbearance, "about the "only well-bred sensible man in your whole city."

Not long after his re-appearance in London he produced his *Cozeners*. Here again was legitimate satire. It exposed traffickers in vice, denounced the prevailing lax morality as to places in great men's gifts, laughed at Charles Fox's match-making adventure already referred to, and held up to reprobation macaroni preachers, and traders in simony. Here Mrs. Rudd rehearsed what she soon after acted with the Perreaus, and a gibbet was set up for Dr. Dodd three years before Lord Chesterfield hanged him. Foote had seized the occasion of Mrs. Rudd's trial to expose the frightful corruption then pervading every class, and the flagrant indecencies of barter and sale which went on as to government places and sinecures among agents the lowest and least worthy. Some of the knaveries ascribed to Mrs. Fleec'em in this piece might seem indeed extravagant (as where, after ordering a quantity of silk which she carries off in her own coach unpaid for, she carries off the silkmercer too,[1] bewildered by her fascinations, to a mad-doctor previously prepared for his reception, and there leaves him to settle with that worthy, who speedily claps a straight-waistcoat on him), did not the stories actually recorded of Mrs. Rudd exceed them all. Nor are the dupes of the

[1] This was not so clever a mercer as that other commemorated by Horace Walpole in connection with this ingenious lady. "Preparatory "to her trial," he writes to Mann, "she sent for some brocaded silks to "a mercer; she pitched on a rich one, "and ordered him to cut off the pro- "per quantity: but the mercer re- "flecting that if she were hanged, "as was probable, he should never "be paid, pretended he had no scis- "sors, but would carry home the "piece, cut off what she wanted, and "send it to Newgate. She saw his "apprehension; pulled out her "pocket-book; and, giving him a "bank-note of 20*l*, said, 'There is a "'pair of scissors.'"—Naturally the interest inspired by so cool and consummate an offender was universal, and even Dr. Johnson regretted that he could not go to see Mrs. Rudd. He'd have gone fifteen years ago: "but now, Sir, they have a trick of "putting everything into the news- "papers." Boswell went, of course.

comedy less amusing than the rogues. Most laughable is the family of the Aircastles; whose booby son, played by Weston, gave Foote his opportunity for a laugh at the Charles Fox adventure with the West-Indian heiress. The prize Mrs. Fleec'em had provided for Toby was a black girl, with no end of money, but she, like Miss Phipps, had an objection to very dark eyebrows.[1] Foote himself played Aircastle, and so humoured the joke with Weston that the "private boxes," we are told in a letter of the time, filling always nightly as this scene was coming on, were "convulsed with laughter."

But the most masterly sketch in the *Cozeners* was that of the fashionable preacher Dr. Dodd. This wretched person had very recently offered a large bribe to Lady Apsley on condition that she obtained for him, from the Chancellor, the living of St. George's Hanover-square; and such indignation was excited by it, and by Foote's exposure of it in this play, that Dodd's name was struck out of the list of the king's chaplains.[2] He is introduced

[1] The reader may be amused if I subjoin an extract from this scene (Act iii, Sc. ii.), once so celebrated and mirth-moving, now long forgotten and passed away.

"*Mrs. Air.* Toby will be very happy, I am sure. You see, Madam, what the lad is.

Mrs. Fleec'em. A most agreeable youth, I must own; and then his silence is a modest mark of his merit.

Air. Do you hear that, Mrs. Air——

Mrs. A. Yes; and I hope it will make a proper impression on you.—You, doubtless, Madam, know the taste of your niece; may we hope that Toby has any chance of succeeding?

Mrs. Fl. She was prodigiously pleased with Mr. Flaw's account of his parents: which, indeed, I now find to be true in every respect.

Mr. and Mrs. Air. Oh, Madam!

Mrs. Fl. And as to fortune, she is totally careless in that, her own being much more than sufficient.

Air. How manly that is in a woman!—I remember, Miss Patty Plumb, of Jamaica, did the very same—they say her grandfather was transported for robbing a hen-roost——

Mrs. Air. But, as to his figure, Madam; do you apprehend it will strike her? Toby, hold up your head.

Mrs. Fl. I can see no reason against it: indeed, the young gentleman has rather a fairer complexion than what she has been commonly used to; the natives of India, from their climate, have rather a sallow hue.

Mrs. Air. True, Madam.

Mrs. Fl. But, if necessary, that may be easily altered by art; some saffron, or snuff, just skimmed over his face——

Mrs. Air. Quickly.

Air. I have a box of Scotch in my pocket; it may be done in an instant.

Mrs. Fl. Their hair, too, is most commonly dark; but a little German blacking here, on each of the eyebrows——

Toby. If a burnt cork will do, I have one in my pocket.

Air. Mr. Flaw, will you ring for a candle? * * * Mind your behaviour, my good lad. I wish we had time, though, to doctor his face: against their next meeting, I will do it myself. I will manage that matter, I warrant: I learnt the art, last autumn, of a parcel of strollers: they had been playing, during the dogdays, with one Foote, in this town—a fellow, they say, who takes people off, and——"

[2] The miserable creature's piteous

as Dr. Simony; and from the flattering portrait of his admiring wife, Mrs. Simony, some few traits may be drawn for the reader's edification. The Doctor's powers, according to this partial witness, are pretty well known about town: not a more *populous* preacher within the sound of Bow-bells. And she don't mean for the mobility only—*those* every canting fellow can catch; but the best people of fashion arn't ashamed to follow her Doctor. Nor is he one of the humdrum, drawling, long-winded tribe; he never crams congregations, or gives them more than they can carry away: not more than ten or twelve minutes at most. Even the Duchess Dowager of Drowsy was never known to nod at her Doctor. Moreover he doesn't pore, with his eyes close to the book, like a clerk that reads the first lesson—not he! but all extemporary, Madam, with a cambric handkerchief in one hand, and a diamond ring on the other. And then he waves this way and that way; and he curtsies, and he bows, and he bounces, that all the people are ready to ——. But then, she interrupts herself with enthusiasm, his wig! She is sure we must admire his dear wig; not with the bushy brown buckles, dangling and dropping like a Newfoundland spaniel, but short, rounded off at the ear to show his plump cherry cheeks, white as a curd, feather-topped, and the curls as close as a cauliflower. He is so obedient too—as humble and meek as a curate: does duly his duties: never scruples to bury, though it be but a tradesman—unless indeed he happens to be better engaged. Then he is so cheerful, and has such a choice collection of songs. Why, he is constantly asked to the great City feasts, and does, she verily believes, more in-door christenings than any three of the cloth. But above all, her Doctor is none of your schismatics: believes in the whole thirty-nine! And so he would, if there were nine times as many. Such is the excellent Dr. Simony, of a race, we fear, not yet quite extinct upon the earth.

appeal against this step has been lately reprinted in *Notes and Queries* (2nd Series, No. 105). And see Walpole's *Letters*, Ed. Cunningham. vi. 55.

We must not omit to add, in connection with the Aircastle family in this comedy, that son Toby was made also the vehicle for laughing at a book then attracting general attention. Clownish, lumpish, and awkward to the last degree, little Weston was yet called upon continually to sacrifice to the Graces, in ridicule of the Chesterfield Letters then just given to the world. Foote had indeed so strong an aversion to those Letters that he contemplated also a more elaborate burlesque of them. Lord Eliot told the Boswell party that he intended to bring on the stage a father who had tutored his son after the Chesterfield manner; and to show the son, as its natural result, an honest man to every one else, but practising upon his father his father's maxims, and always cheating him. Johnson was greatly pleased with the design, but wished the son to be an out-an-out rogue, providing only that, for poetical justice, the father should be the sole sufferer. Perhaps Johnson's view was the more true, and Foote's the more dramatic.

But an illness intercepted this purpose, which was not renewed, and it was at this time Boswell heard of Foote's having said that he was not afraid to die. Of course it was repeated to Johnson, and was met by the remark that it was not true. Yet the good old man more truly felt and said, in another conversation, that it might have been true; that the act of dying is not really of importance, that it matters far less how a man dies, than how he lives, and that it will at any rate do him no good to whine. At the same time, though Foote was certainly not of the whining sort, he could now hardly fail to mix up with the wearying and depressing thoughts of sickness and approaching age, some sense of life misspent, of opportunities lost, of resources not husbanded, of powers imperfectly used if not misapplied; and accordingly, when he had mastered this illness, at the close of 1774, he wrote to Garrick in contemplation of passing some time on the Continent, and ridding himself of managerial cares. He would go there, he says,

not for pleasure but prudence, for he is tired with racking his brain, tired of toiling like a horse, and crossing seas and mountains in the dreariest seasons, merely to pay servants' wages and tradesmen's bills. He has therefore resolved to let his theatre if he can meet with a proper tenant, and he asks Garrick to help him to one, and he kisses Mrs. Garrick's hands.

Such thoughts and purposes, however, were still in abeyance when the idea of a new comedy occurred to him, and brought on suddenly the last and most terrible trial of his life. He was now to have a bitter test unexpectedly applied to the principle on which throughout all his life he had based his habits of personal caricature, and to find it wofully fail him. There was at this time prominent before the world a woman of such notorious vice and such conspicuous station, that it might have been thought, if ever its application should be warrantable, it would be here; yet when he struck at her, she struck again, and her blow proved heavier than his. He had hereafter to reflect that whatever might be the supposed advantages of personal satire it had this enormous disadvantage, that it is the very vice which most invites its exercise that is most able to bear up against and defy its consequences. The sensitive will sink under injustice which the coarse need only laugh at.

The Duchess of Kingston obtained information that he had satirised her in a piece, the *Trip to Calais*, then in the licenser's hands. Through the Chamberlain's office the secret had oozed. She instantly brought all her influence to bear on Lord Hertford. Foote heard of her intention, and wrote a masterly letter to him. An interview with the Duchess herself in the presence of witnesses followed, but equally against offers of money and threatenings of law Foote stood firm.[1] It is clear that he believed

[1] He took it lightly enough at this time. "The Duchess offered to buy "it off," says Walpole, "but Foote "would not take her money, and "swears he will act her in Lady "Brumpton" (a character in Steele's *Funeral*), "which to be sure is very "applicable." He would not even hold the Duchess as of any account in the business. "*Why has Lord*

himself right, felt his case to be so strong that he *must* triumph, and perceived that if conquered in this instance his vocation as a satirist was gone.

He told Lord Hertford, therefore, that if he saw good to enforce the law against him, it would decide his fate for the future. After such a defeat, it would be impossible for him to muster up courage enough to face folly again. Yet even with this grave forecast of a life made profitless, he would not shrink from claiming the addition of a *Plaudite* to the *Valeat res ludicra!* During his continuance in the service of the public, he had never sought to profit by flattering their passions or falling in with their humours. On all occasions he had exerted his little powers, as indeed he thought it his duty, in exposing foibles however much the favourites of the day, and condemning prejudices however protected or popular. Sometimes he believed he had done this with success. At any rate, he had never lost his credit with the public, because they knew, whatever errors of judgment he might have committed, he proceeded on principle. They knew that he had disdained being either the echo or the instrument of any man however exalted in station, and that he had never consented to receive reward or protection from any other hands than their own.

Lord Hertford felt the difficulty, and seems to have done his best to act fairly in the circumstances. He saw

"*Hertford refused to licence my "piece?*" he repeated, to one who asked that question of him. "Oh, "that's intelligible enough. He "asked me to make his youngest son "a boxkeeper, and because I would "not he stopped my play." To those who heard it this had a double meaning. Garrick also wrote to Colman thus (June 25, 1775): — "We "wanted you much at the election "to-day. Foote was in great spirits, "but bitter against the Lord Cham- "berlain. He will bully them into "a licence. The Duchess has had "him in her closet and offered to "bribe him; but Cato himself, "though he had one more leg than "our friend, was not more stoically "virtuous than he has been. You "shall know all when I see you." A letter of Horace Walpole's is worth adding: — "The dame," he writes to Mason (August 5, 1775), "as if he "had been a member of parliament, "offered to buy him off. Aris- "tophanes's Grecian virtue was not "to be corrupted; but he offered to "read the piece, and blot out what- "ever passages she would mark that "she thought applicable to her case. "She was too cunning to bite at this; "and they parted."

Foote and suggested a compromise. Foote at once conceded that he would remove any particular passages pointed out as overstepping the fair limits of public satire, but to this the Duchess flatly refused consent. Nothing would satisfy her but entire suppression. For this she would even remunerate him, but no other condition would she tolerate. In a second interview at Kingston-house, in the presence of Lord Mountstuart (who afterwards confirmed Foote's appeal for support as to the truth of this averment), he rejected "splendid "offers" to this effect then made to him. He still held himself safe. He could not believe, as he wrote to Lord Hertford, that because a capricious woman conceived that he had pinned her ruffle awry, he should be punished by a poniard struck deep in his heart.

But he did not know the antagonist with whom he had to deal, or that the wound was indeed to be mortal. She had now called to her aid a man as devoid of principle as herself, and with even more abundant means of giving effect to his reckless audacity of wickedness. This fellow, one Jackson, an Irish parson who afterwards became involved in treasonable practices before the outbreak of the Irish rebellion, and poisoned himself in prison on the eve of the day appointed for his execution, immediately opened all the batteries of most unscrupulous libel against Foote. The effect may be imagined of the use of money without stint, in the execution without remorse of such a scheme. It is appalling even yet to turn to the newspapers and pamphlets of that day, and see the cold and cruel persistence in the attacks against the great humourist, into whose vortex even journals calling themselves respectable were drawn.[1]

Foote at last showed a certain sign of quailing under it.

[1] Men also of respectable name joined in it, and a person who had represented the Duchess in one of the interviews "the Rev. Mr. "Foster, a clergyman of high re- "spectability" (Peake's *Memoirs of the Colmans*, i. 388) swore to his belief that Foote had agreed to suppress the piece on receiving two thousand pounds. But this witness, though incapable of any deliberate misreport, was upwards of eighty years of age at the time, and a man of a very impracticable temper, whose testi-

A cry of pain was wrung from him. He offered to suppress the scenes that had given offence, if the Duchess would give directions that the newspaper attacks should not continue. This, it is true, was after the visit of one of her friends, a member of the Privy Council, who had eagerly interceded for her; but in whatever way elicited, it presented itself as a triumph, and so she treated it. She rejected his offer with contempt, and called him not

money, opposed to Lord Mountstuart's, could by no means be implicitly accepted. To this Garrick refers in a letter to Colman. (*Ibid.*) "Notwithstanding Foster's oath, Foote "has thrown the Duchess upon her "back, and there has left her, as "you or I would do. She is sick, "and has given up the cause, and "has made herself very ridiculous, "and hurt herself much in the "struggle. Foote's letter is one of "his best things, in his best manner."

I subjoin the two letters that followed; and if, Foote's is truly to be called a masterpiece of wit, of irony, and of matchless satire, that of the Duchess may be held not less supreme in foulness of allusion and cool impudence of assumption. For there is not a word in the letter to which she affects to reply that in the remotest degree countenances what she at once proceeds to take for granted. But if she were capable of any feeling at all, the punishment which fell upon her, in Foote's rejoinder, was certainly as terrible as it was swift. These letters were lately reprinted in *Notes and Queries*, but they are now given here with much more completeness and accuracy.

"TO MR. FOOTE.

"SIR,

"I was at dinner when I received "your ill-judged letter. As there is "little consideration required, I shall "*sacrifice* a moment to answer it.

"A member of *your* Privy Council "can never hope to be of a lady's "cabinet.

"I know too well what is due to "my own dignity to enter into a "compromise with an extortionable "assassin of private reputation. If "I before abhorred you for your "slander, I now despise you for your "concessions; it is a proof of the "illiberality of your satire, when you "can publish or suppress it as best "suits the needy convenience of your "purse. You first had the cowardly "baseness to draw the sword; and, "if I sheath it until I make you "crouch like the subservient vassal "as you are, then is there not spirit "in an injured woman, nor meanness "in a slanderous Buffoon.

"To a man my sex alone would "have screened me from attack—but "I am writing to the descendant of "a Merry-Andrew, and prostitute "the term of manhood by applying "it to Mr. Foote.

"Clothed in my innocence, as in "a coat of mail, I am proof against "an host of foes, and, conscious of "never having intentionally offended "a single individual, I doubt not but "a brave and generous public will "protect me from the malevolence of "a theatrical assassin. You shall "have cause to remember, that "though I would have given liberally "for the relief of your necessities, "I scorn to be bullied into a purchase "of your silence.

"There is something, however, in "your *pity* at which my nature re-"volts. To make me an offer of *pity* "at once betrays your insolence and "your vanity. I will keep the pity you "send until the morning before you "are turned off, when I will return "it by a *Cupid* with a box of lip-

only a base coward and a slanderous buffoon, a merry-andrew and a theatrical assassin, but struck at him with even fouler and more terrible imputations. Walpole has

"salve, and a choir of choristers shall "chaunt a stave to your requiem.

"E. KINGSTON.

"Kingston House,

"Sunday, 13th August.

"P.S. You would have received "this sooner, but the servant has "been a long time writing it."

"TO THE DUCHESS OF KINGSTON.

"MADAM,

"Though I have neither time nor "inclination to answer the illiberal "attacks of your agents, yet a public "correspondence with your grace is "too great an honour for me to de-"cline. I can't help thinking but it "would have been prudent in your "grace to have answered my letter "before dinner, or at least postponed "it to the cool hour of the morning; "you would then have found that I "had voluntarily granted that re-"quest, which you had endeavoured, "by so many different ways, to "obtain.

"Lord Mountstuart, for whose "amiable qualities I have the highest "respect, and whose name your "agents first very unnecessarily pro-"duced to the public, must recollect, "when I had the honour to meet him "at Kingston-house by your grace's "appointment, that instead of beg-"ging relief from your charity, I "rejected your splendid offers to "suppress the *Trip to Calais*, with "the contempt they deserved. In-"deed, madam, the humanity of my "royal and benevolent master, and "the public protection, have placed "me much above the reach of your "bounty.

"But why, madam, put on your "coat of mail against me? I have "no hostile intentions. Folly, not "Vice, is the game I pursue. In "those scenes which you so unac-"countably apply to yourself, you "must observe, that there is not the "slightest hint at the little incidents "of your life which have excited the "curiosity of the grand inquest for "the county of Middlesex. I am "happy however, madam, to hear "that your robe of innocence is in "such perfect repair; I was afraid "it might be a little the worse for "the wearing. May it hold out to "keep your grace warm the next "winter!

"The progenitors your grace has "done me the honour to give me are, "I presume, merely metaphorical "persons, and to be considered as "the authors of my muse, and not "of my manhood. A Merry-Andrew "and a prostitute are not bad poetical "parents, especially for a writer of "plays: the first to give the humour "and mirth, the last to furnish the "graces, and powers of attraction. "Prostitutes, and players too, must "live by pleasing the public; not "but your grace may have heard of "ladies who, by *private practice*, "have accumulated great fortunes.

"If you mean that I really owe "my birth to that pleasant connexion, "your grace is grossly deceived. My "father was, in truth, a very useful "magistrate and respectable country "gentleman, as the whole county of "Cornwall will tell you: my mother, "the daughter of Sir Edward Goodere, "baronet, who represented the county "of Hereford. Her fortune was large, "and her morals irreproachable, till "your grace condescended to stain "them. She was upwards of four-"score years old when she died; and, "what will surprise your grace, *was* "*never married but once* in her life.

"I am obliged to your grace for "your intended present on the day, "as you politely express it, when I "am to be turned off.—But where "will your grace get the Cupid to "bring me the lip salve?—That

described her letter and its sequel. "Drunk with triumph "she would give the mortal blow with her own hand, but, "as the instrument she chose was a *goose*-quill, the stroke "recoiled on herself. She wrote a letter in the *Evening* "*Post* which not the lowest of her class, who tramp in "pattens, would have set her mark to. Billingsgate from a "Ducal coronet was inviting; however, Foote, with all the "delicacy she ought to have used, replied only with wit, "irony, and confounding satire. The Pope will not "be able to wash out the spots with all the holy water in "the Tiber. I imagine she will escape a trial, but Foote "has given her the *coup de grace*." Soon after he wrote to Mason, "What à chef-d'œuvre is Foote's answer!" to which Mason responds, "I agree with you in thinking "Foote's answer one of the very best things in the Eng-"lish language, and prefer it in its kind: Mr. Pope's "letter to Lord Hervey is nothing to it." "The Duchess "is a clever sort of woman," said a country squire who had received some services from her, "but she was never "so much out in her life as when she ventured to write a "letter to Mr. Foote." "She was resolved to have a new "kick," said Hoadly, who, though no friend of Foote's, cannot but add his tribute to the general feeling, "and he "has given it to her to the purpose."

Masterly and complete as the answer was, however, it was written with an aching heart. Openly Foote would not now shrink, but her stab was rankling in him. She did *not* escape her trial. She was arraigned for bigamy before her peers, was convicted, was stripped of her title of

"family, I am afraid, has long "quitted your service.

"Pray, madam, is not Jackson the "name of your female confidential "secretary? and is not she generally "clothed in black petticoats made "out of your weeds?

"'So mourn'd the dame of Ephesus her love.'

"I fancy your grace took the hint "when you last resided at Rome. "You heard there, I suppose, of a "certain Joan, who was once elected "a Pope, and in humble imitation "have converted a pious parson into "a chambermaid. The scheme is "new in this country, and has doubt-"less its particular pleasures. That "you may never want the *Benefit of* "*the Clergy*, in every emergence, is "the sincere wish of your grace's "most devoted most obliged humble "servant,

"SAMUEL FOOTE."

Duchess, and, as Dunning threatened her, might have been burnt in the hand, but that meanwhile the death of her first husband's brother, Lord Bristol, had given her still the right to that privilegé of peerage she claimed, and which, enabling her to leave the court punished only by a lower step in the rank of nobility, left the record of those portentous proceedings, partly a State Trial and partly a History of Moll Flanders, to carry its traits of dignified morality and justice down to succeeding generations. But though her trial was thus over, Foote's was but to begin. He resolved to drag forth the secret libeller and fight the matter out with him. He recast the *Trip to Calais;* struck out Lady Kitty Crocodile; put in, under the guise of a low Irish pimp and pander whom he called Dr. Viper, his hidden slanderer Dr. Jackson; and announced the first night of the *Capuchin.*

The comedy was played at the Haymarket a few months after the Kingston trial, when Foote played Dr. Viper, and threw into it his bitterest pungency of manner as well as words. It was successful, yet with a difference from old successes. The house was packed with enemies; and though the friends were strong enough to carry it against opposition, the opposition was also strong enough still to make itself heard. It was full of "good strokes," says one who was present, but they did not tell as usual. Jackson's libels had not been without their effect even within the walls of the Haymarket. "There was great "applause, but rather more disapprobation," says Miss Wilkes, when she saw it some nights after the first.[1] Nevertheless it continued to be acted until the theatre closed. Jackson had meanwhile resolved that if possible the theatre never should re-open, and he took his measures accordingly.

Such was the character of the libels against Foote, and their inveterate frequency between the closing of that season and the opening of the next, that it soon became obvious the matter could not rest where it was. The impression became general that, without first applying

[1] Letters of Wilkes, ii. 253.

authorised means to arrest the calumny, the Haymarket must remain shut. Notices to this effect appeared in respectable journals. But, whatever Foote may have felt, his attitude betrayed no discomposure. He took no public notice of the rumours. His advertisements appeared as usual, only a little later; and at the close of May he opened his season of 1776 with the *Bankrupt*. The house was crammed, men of rank and men of letters were in all parts of the theatre, and something too evidently was expected. It broke out as soon as Foote appeared, when such was the reception given him by a small knot of people stationed in the gallery that all the ladies present in the boxes immediately withdrew. But even then he showed no lack of courage; and the spirit and feeling with which he at once stepped forward and addressed the audience, produced a sudden revulsion in his favour among those who before had shown indifference. He appealed to their humanity and justice. He had summoned his libeller into the Court of King's Bench, and that very day the rule had been made absolute. Were they not too noble and too just to discard an old servant, without giving him time to prove that he had never been unworthy of their favour, and would never disgrace their protection? The comedy was permitted to proceed, and a riot was not again attempted.

But Jackson had not yet thrown his last stake. He had hardly been convicted as a libeller in the highest common-law court, and publicly dismissed from the paper which had to make a formal apology for his libel, when there appeared suddenly at Bow-street a discarded coachman of Foote's, a fellow of the worst character, and branded by the subsequent proceedings with unspeakable infamy, who preferred a charge against his late master giving open, confessed, and distinct form to all the unspeakable rumours for which Jackson had been convicted. We spare the reader the miserable detail.[1] For months Foote

[1] An unpublished letter of Foote's to Garrick is before me endorsed by the latter "Foote's letter to me about "the Footman." Garrick had been

was kept with an accusation hanging over him, of such a kind as to embitter the most unsullied life against which it might be breathed. Every artifice was used to prolong the time of trial. But meanwhile he proved his friends. There was not a step in the preparation of his defence which was not solicitously watched by Garrick. "I have "been most cruelly used," Foote at last writes to him: "but I have, thank God, got to the bottom of this "infernal contrivance. God for ever bless you." "My "dear, kind friend," he writes the following day, "ten "thousand thanks for your note. I shall make the proper "use of it directly. I am to swear to an information "this evening. My spirits are much better, but I am "fatigued to death with such a crowd of comforters; "I have this instant got rid of a room-full. May nothing "but halcyon days and nights crown the rest of your life! "is the sincere prayer of S. FOOTE."

With such crowds of comforters flocking round him, he was able to play his various comedies as usual, and is said never to have played better. So far from being abandoned, so far from any one doubting or turning from him, Cooke says that "his theatre, from the first moment "of the charge to the close of the trial, exhibited a con- "tinual assemblage of rank, learning, fashion, and friend- "ship. Among the two former classes particularly are to be "numbered two royal Dukes, the late Duke of Roxburgh, "the Marquis of Townshend, Mr. Dunning, Mr. Burke, "Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Fitzherbert, many foreign "noblemen, and a group of others of the first respect- "ability."[1] Mr. Dunning was his counsel, and, the case

interesting himself with Woodfall of the *Chronicle*, Bate of the *Morning Post*, and others. "Ten thousand "thanks, my dear Sir, for your kind "message to me by Mr. Woodfall, "nor am I less obliged to you for "using your influence where I begged "it. I have directed Jewel to ad- "vertize all my performances in the "*Morning Post*, and if the gentle- "man who is supposed to be the "editor should again turn his thoughts "to the drama, me and my stage he "may ever command."

[1] Cooke does not mention, but it is well worth recording here, that the King also took occasion during the interval to command the Haymarket performances, when perhaps the solitary instance occurred of a play damned in the presence of royalty. It was the *Contract*, taken by Doctor

having been moved into the King's Bench, Lord Mansfield was his judge. The charge had scarcely been stated before it was demolished, and the special jury, even refusing to turn round in the box, at once cried out together, Not guilty. But hardly could it have been guessed, until this issue was known, what a deep and sensitive suffering Foote's manliness and spirit had concealed. Murphy hastened from the court to Suffolk-street to be messenger of the glad tidings, when his old friend, instead of manifesting joy, fell to the ground in strong hysterics.

His theatre was soon let to Colman, and under the new management he played but thrice.[1] A few months before that final appearance we get our last near glimpse of him, and see one of the last flashes of his humour. It is at the Queen's drawing-room in January 1777. Greeted heartily by all around him, made to feel that his infamous persecutors had not been able to sully his name, and singled

Thomas Franklin from the *Triple Marriage* of Destouches, and was played after one of Foote's comedies. When Foote lighted the King to his chair, his Majesty asked who the piece was written by? "By one of "your Majesty's chaplains," said Foote, unable even then to suppress his wit; "and dull enough to have been "written by a bishop."

[1] The reader will perhaps thank me for here subjoining a complete list of the dramatic pieces of Foote, classed after his own description, with the dates at which they were respectively produced upon the stage.

1. Diversions of the Morning. (Not printed) . . . 1747
2. Auction of Pictures. (Not printed) 1748
3. The Knights. A Comedy 1748
4. Taste. A Comedy . . 1752
5. The Englishman in Paris. A Comedy . . . 1753
6. The Englishman returned from Paris. A Farce . 1756
7. The Author. A Comedy . 1757
8. The Diversions of the Morning. Altered into a Farce. (Not printed) . 1758
9. The Minor. A Comedy . 1760
10. The Liar. A Comedy . . 1761
11. The Orators. A Comedy . 1762
12. The Mayor of Garrett. A Comedy . . . 1763
13. The Patron. A Comedy . 1764
14. The Commissary. A Comedy . . . 1765
15. Prelude on Opening the Haymarket Theatre . . 1767
16. The Devil upon Two Sticks. A Comedy . . . 1768
17. The Lame Lover. A Comedy 1770
18. The Maid of Bath. A Comedy 1771
19. The Nabob. A Comedy . 1772
20. Piety in Pattens. A Farce. (Not printed) . . . 1773
21. The Bankrupt. A Comedy 1773
22. The Cozeners. A Comedy 1774
23. The Capuchin. A Comedy 1776
24. A Trip to Calais. A Comedy. (Printed, but never performed).

out for recognition by his sovereign, the old spirit for a while reasserts its sway. "Sir George Warren," says Cumberland, who also was present, "had his Order "snatched off his ribbon, encircled with diamonds to the "value of 700*l.* Foote was there, and lays it upon the "parsons; having secured, as he says, his gold snuff-box in "his waistcoat pocket upon seeing so many black gowns "in the room."

In May 1777 he played at the Haymarket for the last time, in the *Devil on Two Sticks*. Cooke saw him, and says his cheeks were lank and withered, his eyes had lost their fire, and his person was sunk and emaciated. Five months later he left town for Dover, not without the presentiment that he would never return. He had a choice collection of pictures in Suffolk-street, among them a fine portrait of the incomparable comedian, Weston, who had died the preceding year; and on the day before his journey, after examining them all in a way wholly unusual with him, he suddenly stopped as he was leaving the room, went up again to Weston's picture, and, after a steady and silent gaze at it for some minutes, exclaimed with tears in his voice, "Poor Weston!" and then turning to Jewel, with what sounded as a tone of sad reproach for his own fancied security, "It will very "soon be *poor Foote*, or the intelligence of my spirits "deceives me."

He reached Dover on his way to France on the 20th October, 1777, attended by one servant. He had suffered much fatigue on the journey, and next morning at breakfast was seized with a shivering fit, under which he sank in three hours. Jewel had at once been sent for, and arrived only to take charge of the body for removal to London. But before he left Dover, he wished to leave some memorial there of the death of a man so celebrated; and this faithful servant and treasurer, who had been for years in attendance on him, who knew all his weakness, all his foibles, all that most intimately reveals a man's nature in the hard money business of the world, could

think of nothing more appropriate for his epitaph in the church of St. Mary than to express how liberal he was in spending what too many men use all their care to keep, and he therefore ordered to be cut upon the marble nothing about his humour or his genius, about his writing or his acting, but that he had a hand

Open as day for melting charity.

And so we may leave him. He lies in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, without any memorial either in stone or marble.

THE END.

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